



GEORGE III, IN CORONATION ROBES

GEORGE THE THIRD

A Record of a King's Reign

BY

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M.A. OXON

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Dedicatory Letter

to

Robert Balmain Mowat

MY DEAR MOWAT:

At School it was my good fortune to learn History from one who had an almost fanatical regard for Macaulay. I believed implicitly all that he told us; but at the same time I felt that he had what we called 'a down' on George III, whom he duly presented to the class as a very stupid and bigoted person, who defied the customs of the Constitution, lost America to the Empire and brought untold miseries to Ireland. One day I asked him why, if George was such a bad king, the people had not sent him about his business; and his reply—a very incisive 'Jacobitism, my boy'—seemed to me a satisfactory one, because then I knew very little about Jacobitism.

Later I came to learn that Englishmen are not only peculiarly impatient of bad kings but that they have a remarkable genius for changing dynasties without violating the sacred principles of Monarchy; and that brought me back to the old doubt that George III had not had a fair deal. Histories did not help me very much: they all appeared to emphasize the truth of the assertion that George was a bad king. But they also usually told me that the Whigs were the salt of the eighteenth-century earth; and although I had been nurtured in principles which were definitely hostile to Toryism I could not accept that statement. So, there was nothing for it but to read as widely as I could the records of George III's reign; and to form my own conclusions about this 'bad king' whom the British peoples suffered to reign over them for sixty years.

My conclusions I offer to you as a small token of the deep debt of gratitude I owe you; for it was in your rooms at Oxford that I learnt first that historical study was a fascinatingly humanizing influence; and that lesson gave me a hobby to solace a reasonably active official life.

My first conclusion is that George III was a typical Englishman.

He loved respectability, perhaps because he was too unimaginative to be unconventional. He shared the Englishman's belief in the superiority of England and everything English. He had the Englishman's amiability and bigotry, courage and obstinacy. Love of respectability made him a good husband and the patron of every respectable movement in art and literature—such as the Royal Academy, founded in his reign, and the projected Order of Minerva for men of letters. His conviction that there was no other country in the world like his native country compelled him to withstand the rebellious American colonists and to regard the French as 'a licentious people'; and his amiability and bigotry, courage and obstinacy, were rules of conduct in his everyday life. Thus, while a starving mob, driven by agitators to commit acts of violence, might hurl the filthiest abuse at his head, while politicians, angered because he had beaten them at their own game, might urge that his conduct as a King was unconstitutional, the fact remains that in the eyes of the majority of his people George III was—what he claimed to be in his first Speech to Parliament—a King who 'gloried in the name of Britain' in a way that none of his predecessors had done since the nation had laid 'Good Queen Bess' to rest. Unlike his grandfather and great-grandfather, George III remained 'anchored' in the land which had summoned his House to serve as a bulwark against Popery; and as a result he acquired that insularity of outlook, which is so commonly to be met with in the British race, and which explains so many British triumphs and prejudices.

My second conclusion is that George III was a much cleverer man than it has been the custom to allow. His correspondence indicates clearly what a fine grasp he had of the details of government; and his shrewd appreciation of affairs and the soundness of most of his decisions demand the highest admiration. His letters reveal that he was not only a King who conscientiously carried through the duties of kingship, but also a man of orderly mind, who took first things first, and was therefore seldom 'panicked' by the weight of business. He made mistakes like any other man; but, having regard to the nature of public opinion in his reign, they were surprisingly few; and his judgments suggest that he was capable of a clear insight into character. Admittedly he had not that greatness of mind which can forget

DEDICATORY LETTER TO ROBERT BALMAIN MOWAT

enmities easily: he hated intensely Wilkes and Fox, but he was never blind to their abilities; and when the latter came into power he was generously given that support which a conscientious minister has the right to expect from his sovereign in a system of limited monarchy. My friend Worts, whose criticisms are invaluable to me in the making of my books, thinks that George III had at his back a sort of bureau of advisers whose business it was to keep their King on the rails; and suggests that Bute, whom he somewhat irreverently but not in my view inaccurately describes as ‘a devilishly clever fellow,’ was the chief figure in such an arrangement. But, as you know, there is no evidence to support such a plausible theory; and one is left to face the fact that whatever ability George III possessed was derived from native wit and determination to do his duty.

In a year which has witnessed such a remarkable demonstration of affection for a reign of twenty-five years one not unnaturally ponders the causes which have operated to bind so familiarly King and People. Here, in my view, one must give credit to George III, for he strove to put the Crown above Party—and to a certain extent succeeded in doing so though perhaps not with the same results as he had envisaged when he embarked upon his struggle with political factions. But, despite the hatreds which his incursions into politics aroused, he never lost that dignity which emanates from the Throne; and in addition he had that charming knack of being accessible to the humblest of his subjects. When the gossips tittered over the story of his asking the old countrywoman how the apple got inside the dumpling [and the story is almost certainly a libel!] they forgot that his grandfather George II was too pompous a little man ever to have discussed such a matter with a member of ‘the lower orders,’ and that his great-grandfather George I could not have done had he wanted to, because he knew no English to speak of. And the scorn which was poured upon ‘Farmer George’ was virtually a compliment, for not only was George III extremely well-informed on agricultural matters but his interest in a calling which in England has always been a most honourable one won him the unqualified support of a section of the community which has always been the staunch friend of Monarchy and the sworn foe of Revolution.

Whether you agree with my conclusions or reject them as

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unreasoned, I know that you will give me a patient hearing. I am fully conscious of the shortcomings of this work; but the canvas which was stretched out before me was a thickly crowded one; and it has not always been easy to bring into proper perspective the chief figures in the scene which it portrays. What I have tried to do is to make George III the dominant figure; but at the same time I have been compelled to give prominence to the many remarkable men who played opposite to him during the fifty effective years of his reign; and only critics can tell me how far I have succeeded in my purpose. For long enough I wrestled with the problem of the 'balance' of the book: so much space was required to chronicle events prior to 1784, for in that period the King was an active participant in the political struggle; and consequently I have dealt with the remaining thirty-six years in 131 pages—in other words in 80 fewer pages than I have devoted to the earlier period. There is something to be said for such an arrangement: after 1784 George III is to a certain extent overshadowed politically by that remarkable young man, Mr William Pitt, who stands forth as the champion of a new conception of Monarchy; and after 1811 I had only the pathetic shadow of a King to deal with.

In self-defence [for the critics may read into my book something which was never intended] I must state that George III is not one of my heroes, and consequently I have no reason for wishing to whitewash his character. The book is, what I hinted at earlier in my letter to you, a patient protest against a school lesson, which I find still being taught; and if I have succeeded in re-adjusting the historical balances only in the smallest degree in George III's favour then my work has not been altogether futile. I lay no claim to scholarship: in another place I have endeavoured to record the debt of gratitude which I owe to those fine scholars who have given so much of their time and thought to eighteenth-century history; and whatever virtue there may be in my book is virtually a tribute to the achievements of those upon whose works I have drawn so freely.

J. D. GRIFFITH DAVIES.

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LEEDS.

31st December 1935.

Acknowledgements

I MUST BEGIN by expressing my gratitude for the many kindnesses which I always receive from Mr R. J. Gordon, the Librarian, and the Staff of the City of Leeds Public Libraries. I pester them with all sorts of queries, but they always deal with them courteously and efficiently: sometimes I feel a certain shyness in approaching them, but I am only too well aware that they all are genuinely eager to help those who use the Library. Comparisons have admittedly a flavour of odium about them; but a reasonable use of other libraries up and down the country compels me to say that I have nowhere met better and more efficient service than is available in the City of Leeds Public Libraries; and in connection with this particular book I would like to thank Miss Calam and Mr Hockey of Mr Gordon's staff for the help they have given me.

Again I record my thanks to my father, the Reverend Thomas Davies, and to my friend, Mr F. R. Worts, for their criticisms of the text and for reading the proofs; and to Miss C. M. Driffield for making the Index and for her excellent pictorial map of North America and useful genealogical end paper.

What I should have done without Mr Alan McGaw's help I do not know: I mentioned to him the sort of illustrations I would like, and he promptly produced reproductions; and I feel certain that those which he has found for me do very definitely enhance the value of the book. The credit for this part of the work is his. Acknowledgement of the right to reproduce is made on each plate.

My debt to those scholars who have made a specialist study of the history of the eighteenth century in general and of the reign of George III in particular can never be adequately stated; but in the Bibliographical Note I have listed the books which I have freely used in making this *Life* of George III, knowing that any credit belongs to them as much as to me.

J. D. G. D.

A Note on the Design of the Jacket

MISS CECILE M. DRIFFIELD has supplied the following note on the motifs which she has used in her design of the jacket for this book:

‘The Petticoat and Jack-boot were obvious motifs to use in view of the contemporary Whig feeling that King George was dominated for a considerable part of his public life by the Dowager Princess of Wales and John, Earl of Bute. Both the petticoat and the boot are true to the fashions of the period. By superimposing a silhouette of the King’s head upon them I have tried pictorially to emphasize the point made by Mr Davies in the book, that King George III had very decided views about his own place in the constitutional life of the nation and was not unreasonably dominated by his mother and Bute.’

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CHAPTER I

Mother's Apron-strings

NORFOLK HOUSE in St James's Square, London, was early astir on June 4th, 1738. Augusta, Princess of Wales, had been suddenly seized with the birth-pangs of the child who was destined to become George III. It was most unexpected: when she had retired to her bed the night before she was perfectly well, and although a 'happy event' was expected it was not scheduled to take place before August. At five o'clock in the morning Lord Baltimore was dragged out of his bed to go to acquaint the King of the 'interesting state of the Princess'; and other members of the Norfolk House suite hastened here and there to summon the Archbishop of Canterbury and the great 'personages of State' to witness the delivery of the baby.

Only Dr John Potter, the Archbishop, was in time to see the birth take place at 7.30 a.m. Half an hour later the Earl of Carnarvon rode off to tell the King that the Princess and child were doing well. Which was not strictly the truth: for while the Princess was not greatly affected by her second 'lying in' the baby was a miserably puny little fellow, obviously born two months out of due time. At eleven o'clock that same night, despairing of his life, his parents had him privately baptized by Dr Thomas Secker, Bishop of Oxford, who acted on this occasion in his capacity of Rector of the parish of St James's. The baby was then taken away to be wet-nursed by a sturdy countrywoman, the wife of one of his father's gardeners; and at her breasts he thrived so rapidly that the deficiencies of premature birth were soon made good. On July 2nd the public baptism took place at Norfolk House. Dr Secker named the baby George William Frederick; and the King of Sweden,

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the Duke of Saxe-Gotha and the Queen of Prussia were the god-parents.

When Norfolk House was demolished in 1742 to make room for a more modern Georgian mansion the bed on which George III had been born was carefully treasured. Sir Nathaniel Wraxall relates how in 1781 he

saw not much more than a year ago the identical bed in which the Princess of Wales was delivered, now removed to the Duke of Norfolk's seat of Worksop in the county of Nottingham.

It was, according to Wraxall, a bed 'of very ordinary description.'

* * *

THE EARLY HANOVERIANS had a fatal habit of family discords. George William Frederick took his place in a most unhappy family circle. His father, Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales, in 1738 a young man of thirty-one, was loathed by his royal father and mother, George II and Queen Caroline.

My dear first-born is the greatest ass, and the greatest liar, and the greatest canaille, and the greatest beast in the whole world, and I heartily wish he was out of it.

Such was the King's opinion of the Heir to the Throne: the Queen shared her husband's views, and a hundred times a day she wished her son was in his grave. Yet 'Fritz'—so he was called in the family circle—was not a particularly bad young man. He had most charming manners; he was fond of music and literature; and, when judged by the standards of his own times, he was a good husband and an indulgent father. But he was an inveterate gambler, an indiscriminating wench, and a thorough-going liar. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to irritate his father and mother—and to do so in a way which outwardly always put him in the right and them in the wrong.

Augusta, Princess of Wales, a sister of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, whom 'Fritz' married at St James's on April 26th, 1736, was in many respects a most extraordinary woman. She was not good-looking; but she was far more attractive than her enemies would have posterity believe. She was tall, perhaps a little awkward in her gait, accomplished and amiable; and 'Fritz' was genuinely fond of her, and she made him very happy

in his home life. It is true that he kept mistresses, but such was the fashion with 'persons of quality,' and it would have been thought very odd had he not done so. Had not his own father, who was never tired of boasting that Caroline was the best of wives, written to his queen—'you must love the Walmoden for she loves me'? And, like the dutiful wife that Caroline was, she went to no end of trouble to see that this rather gross and by no means pretty German mistress was housed in comfortable apartments in the royal palaces. German princesses were brought up to be tolerant of the lusty amours of their consorts: their duty was to bring forth children conceived in lawful wedlock, and the majority who came to marry England's kings and princes performed the duty prolifically. Augusta accepted 'Fritz' as she found him; and she was probably well aware of, and not greatly disturbed by, the notorious parties which he gave in the house of her own midwife, Mrs Cannon, in Jermyn Street.

The trouble between the King and 'Fritz' was the natural outcome of the German conception of fatherhood. George II, as a young man, had been placed under restraint by his father, George I. He had hated his father as bitterly as 'Fritz' hated him, because George I had most cruelly treated his consort, the unhappy Sophia Dorothea of Celle; and no attempt was made to conceal this hatred from those who formed the Court. The bitter experience of his own youth was forgotten by George II when he had children. What his own father had done he would do; and 'Fritz' must remain subservient to his will. He tried to compel him, even after his marriage, to live under the same roof as his mother and father. He deliberately kept him short of money. He allowed him to take no conspicuous part in public life.

In a man of 'Fritz's' spirit and extravagance such treatment was bound to create the bitterest resentments. When the King himself was Prince of Wales he had received £100,000 a year out of his father's civil list of £700,000; and 'Fritz' argued that he ought to receive a similar sum, especially when the civil list had been increased to £800,000 a year. But George II was at heart a miser; and all he would allow his eldest son was £30,000 a year, which was raised to £50,000 with the greatest reluctance.

Mediocrities are notoriously sensitive. Both George II and

‘Fritz’ were mediocrities. Although the former was always at pains to make people believe that he was master of his own house he was actually most skilfully wife-ridden; and that wife was in turn a tool in Walpole’s hands. The King made no secret of the fact that he did not like England or Englishmen; and whenever he returned from visiting his beloved Hanover he cursed and fumed against the land which metamorphosed him from a petty German elector into a king of a great European State. He was aware that his English subjects thought very indifferently about him. He was the last straw to which they, mistrustful of being submerged in the seas of Popery, tenaciously clutched; and had the Stuarts abjured the Catholic Faith as easily as they abandoned their morals George II would have been speedily returned to his beloved Hanover—or have died as a martyr for the Protestant Faith. And very few Englishmen would have regretted whichever fate had befallen him!

From the moment of his coming to England in 1728 ‘Fritz’ was popular with the people. Indifference to the King could not be more pointedly displayed than by according his son a welcome which he himself seldom received; and the evidence of ‘Fritz’s’ popularity only served to intensify the paternal coolness. For in the fertile soil of a frustrated marriage the seeds of family discord had been well and truly sown, long before the young man came from Hanover to England. From the cradle ‘Fritz’ had been brought up to believe that one day he would marry Sophia Dorothea Wilhelmina, the Princess Royal of Prussia; and as he grew to manhood his eagerness for the match increased. But the childish hatred which his own and the princess’s father had for each other made marriage impossible. Frederick William of Prussia always referred to George II as ‘the Comedian’: a not inapt description, for George was a pompous and dapper little man who always tried to take himself seriously. The English King’s retaliation was equally witty and apt: he dubbed Frederick William ‘the Archbeadle of the Holy Roman Empire.’ So the two monarchs quarrelled like children; and once even went to the extreme of arranging to settle their hatreds by the *duello*. Their children took their future into their own hands by planning to get married secretly; but the English ambassador to the King of Prussia’s court learnt of the scheme, and it was promptly thwarted. ‘Fritz’ could never

forgive his father and Walpole for this interference with his happiness.

Thus soon after his arrival in England 'Fritz' found himself dragged into the vortex of the opposition to the Walpole administration; and this meant that he was politically arrayed against his own father and mother. Walpole's enemies quickly convinced him that he was a most ill-used son. They applauded his attempts to get his own back by petty annoyances of his father and mother. Under the subtle guidance of George Bubb Dodington, later Lord Melcombe, the Prince established an opposition court, in which all sorts of discreditable manœuvres were worked out to undermine Walpole's political influence in the country. And poor 'Fritz' had not the wit to realize that all the time he was nothing better than a political cat's-paw!

The relationship of the King and Prince of Wales was a public scandal which did serious damage to the Monarchy. It found an expression in the Tweedledum-Tweedledee controversy over the merits of Handel's and Buononcini's operas. The King, Queen and Princess Royal were Handel's patrons, and attended his operas at the Haymarket. 'Fritz' and his friends, thereupon, gave their favours to Buononcini, whose operas were performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields. The division of Society into rival operatic camps produced the popular jingle:

Some say compared to Buononcini
That Mynher Handel's but a ninny;
Others aver that he to Handel,
Is scarcely fit to hold a candle.
Strange all this difference should be
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee!

Lord Chesterfield records how once looking in at the Haymarket Opera House and seeing only the King, Queen and the Princess Royal there, he discreetly withdrew for fear of intruding into a family conference! Poor Handel was forced into bankruptcy as a result of the rivalry; but good came out of evil, for thereafter he turned his attention to the composition of those delightful oratorios which are so intimately associated with his name.

Another grievance with 'Fritz' was that his sister was married in 1734 to that ugliest of princes, the Prince of Orange. It was not that his brother-in-law's looks bothered him: it was the

fact that his sister's future was given precedence over his own. It was another example of a father's unnatural treatment of a son; and that son was not like any ordinary son, but the Heir to the Throne. 'Fritz's' friends assiduously emphasized the grievance, and confirmed him in his resolve to give his royal father 'a piece of his mind.' Angrily 'Fritz' confronted the King with three demands. He must be allowed a fixed income suitable to his position; he must be provided with a wife; and he must be given a regiment and permission to serve with it on the Rhine.

The King expressed himself as willing to consider the first two demands, provided that 'Fritz' would undertake for the future to act more courteously towards his mother; but he would not give him a command, nor permit him to serve overseas. George II was always touchy about his reputation as a soldier, and had no intention of seeing it taken from him by a popularity-hunting, though good-for-nothing, son.

For 'Fritz' was careful to win the favours of the mob. Whenever the King was away in Hanover his 'dear first-born' seized every opportunity to demonstrate to the public how attentive he was to the needs of the people over whom one day he would reign. When a great fire threatened to destroy the Temple the Prince left his bed personally to direct the fire brigades; and the great crowd watching the conflagration yelled—'Crown him! Crown him!' His mother, when they brought her an account of the Prince's behaviour, coarsely exclaimed:

My God! popularity always makes me sick, but Fritz's popularity makes me vomit.

The King kept his promise to provide 'Fritz' with a bride—Augusta of Saxe-Gotha; but the expected allowance of £100,000 a year was not forthcoming; and as a result the old bad feeling was accentuated. In a moment of mad irresponsibility 'Fritz' resolved to wash the family's dirty linen in public by appealing to Parliament against his father's decision only to allow him £50,000 a year; but the ruse failed, for the address was rejected by both Houses, though not, it is true, by large majorities. This rebuff merely made 'Fritz' more furious than ever, and like a spoilt child he assumed an air of injured innocence and redoubled his discourtesies towards his parents.

His behaviour at the birth of his first-born, the Princess Augusta, in 1737 was nothing better than a piece of callous caddishness. Not only did he refuse to tell his mother that the Princess was pregnant, but when the labour began he rushed his helpless wife, screaming with pain, through the night from Hampton Court to St James's Palace, so that the Queen should not be present at the birth. The indelicacy of the incident set all the gossiping tongues in London wagging. How on reaching St James's servants had rushed here, there and everywhere to borrow from neighbours the ordinary requisites of a sick-room! How, since there were only dirty sheets in the closet at the palace, the Princess had been put to bed between linen tablecloths! Truly might Queen Caroline exclaim, when she eventually came to St James's and saw the baby:

God bless you, poor little creature, you have come into a disagreeable world!

'Fritz's' studied insult of his mother was for the King the last straw. It was an indignity which he resented 'to the highest degree'; and although the Prince tried to excuse himself on the ground that he was unaware of his wife's condition, the King commanded him to leave St James's as soon as the Princess was fit to be moved. Foreign ambassadors were politely informed that to call upon the Prince of Wales would be 'a thing that would be disagreeable to His Majesty.' The breach between 'Fritz' and his parents was now irreparable. Not even when Queen Caroline lay dying was 'Fritz' allowed to see her. The King knew that the visit would only distress the Queen: he knew, too, that she had no desire ever again to see her first-born. 'Fritz' immediately tried to make capital out of the incident; and the King was presented to the world as a heartless and inhuman father, who at the instigation of the hated Walpole denied his eldest son the privilege of taking farewell of the mother he loved so dearly! Only 'Fritz's' own intimates accepted such an impudent piece of hypocrisy at its face value.

Burdened with debts and without a home of his own 'Fritz' turned to his friends for help. From St James's Palace he took his family, first, to Norfolk House, and, then, soon after the birth of George William Frederick, he went into residence at

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Leicester House in Leicester Square. There met ‘the Patriots’—Walpole’s bitterest political opponents, prominent among whom were Cartaret, Chesterfield, Cobham and Wyndham—to direct their relentless attacks upon the King’s Ministers. Nor were their efforts unrewarded: by truculently rattling sabres and making a martyr of the ear-less Captain Jenkins, they managed to undermine Walpole’s immense political influence in the constituencies; and in 1742 the great Whig Prime Minister, hoping to prolong his political life by detaching ‘Fritz’ from his ‘patriotic’ friends, persuaded the King to attempt a reconciliation with his son. Dr Secker was chosen for the delicate task of mediator, but Leicester House saw through Walpole’s ruse, and ‘Fritz’ informed the Bishop that he would readily accept the King’s terms—his allowance to be increased and some of his more pressing debts to be paid in return for an expression of contrition of past conduct and a promise of better behaviour in the future—when they emanated from the King and not from his Prime Minister. In effect Secker returned with an ultimatum: ‘Fritz’ would not entertain the idea of reconciliation as long as Walpole remained at the head of the King’s government.

Walpole fell: the reconciliation did not take place. It is true that father and son met once to sink their differences; but the King’s refusal to increase ‘Fritz’s’ allowance only resulted in an immediate revival of the quarrel. When Bonnie Prince Charlie and his fierce Highlanders were marching into the heart of England ‘Fritz’ offered his services to the King and government; but the offer was contemptuously rejected. The King probably recognized that it was made merely to create a powerful contrast with his own behaviour; for, on learning of the Pretender’s southward march, George II made feverish preparations to get back to Hanover in the event of a Jacobite victory!

On March 20th, 1751, ‘Fritz’ died suddenly at a quarter to ten at night. ‘Half an hour before he was very cheerful’: he asked to see some of his friends, and had a meal of bread and butter and coffee. Then he was seized with ‘a fit of coughing and spitting.’ At the time Desnoyer, the music master in his little family, was playing the fiddle for his entertainment. ‘Fritz’ interrupted him with the cry—‘*Je sens la mort*’; and before

anyone could go to his assistance he fell back on the pillows, dead.

On the next day, at the King's command, the royal surgeons conducted an autopsy. They found that 'an abscess was formed in his side, the breaking of which destroyed him.' A few days previously the Prince had received a violent blow from a tennis-ball, and it was generally believed that that, and not pleurisy, was the cause of his death. Distracted Bubb Dodington, firmest of friends and most loyal of servants, blamed the doctors: they ought to have called 'in other assistance' when they found that they themselves could not cope with the illness. In his grief Dodington forgot that none of the household at Leicester House ever suspected that his master was so near death: in his own Diary he records that only half an hour before the death took place the Prince's pulse was normal.

Not even in the presence of death could the King forget the terrible hatred which he had for his son; and the royal indifference towards the burial arrangements only served to perpetuate the scandal which their unhappy quarrel had occasioned. To quote Bubb Dodington:

[except for the Lords appointed to hold the pall and attend the chief mourner, and those of his own domestiks] . . . there was not one English Lord, not *one* Bishop, and only one Irish Lord [Limerick], two sons of Dukes [Earl of Drumlandrig and Lord Robert Bertie], one Baron's son [Mr Edgecumbe] and two Privy Councillors [Sir John Rushout and myself], out of these great bodies, to make a show of duty to a Prince, so great in rank and expectation. While we were in the House of Lords it rained very hard . . . ; when we came into Palace Yard, the way to the Abbey was lined with soldiers, but the managers had not afforded the smallest covering over our heads; but by good fortune while we were from under cover it held up. . . . The service was performed without either anthem or organ. So ended this sad day—*Quem semper acerbum, semper honoratum.*

And that was not the full measure of the royal indifference: only as an afterthought was food and drink provided for the mourners!

In the country 'Fritz's' untimely death aroused no great depth of sadness. One Hanoverian was very much like another; and the majority of Englishmen found much genuine amusement

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in the following epitaph, cleverly composed by some wit at the time of 'Fritz's' death :

Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead.
Had it been his father,
I had much rather ;
Had it been his brother,
Still better than another ;
Had it been his sister,
No one would have missed her ;
Had it been the whole generation,
Still better for the nation.
But since it is only Fred,
Who was alive and is dead,
There's no more to be said.

They buried 'Fritz' in Henry VII's Chapel at Westminster. In Oxford, dearest of homes of lost causes, however, the University issued *Epicedia Oxoniensia in obitum celsissimi et desideratissimi Frederici Principis Walliae*, a magnificent production in which the dead Prince's praises were sung by learned Dons in a positive confusion of languages—Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Welsh, being among them !

* * *

IT IS SURPRISING to learn that despite family discords and political intrigues, so much a part and parcel of the daily life of the entourage of the Prince of Wales, the young children were happily nurtured even during 'Fritz's' lifetime. Lady Hervey's description of the home in 1748 [*sub die November 10th*] is a happy picture :

The Prince's family is an example of innocent and cheerful amusement. All this last summer they played abroad, and now in the winter, in a large room, they divert themselves at baseball, a play all who are, or have been, school-boys are well acquainted with. The ladies as well as gentlemen join in this amusement ; and the latter return the compliment in the evening, by playing for an hour at the old and innocent game of push-pin.

'Push-pin' was a child's game which was played when Elizabeth was Queen.

Lady Hervey's description of the simplicity of the family life

in the household of the Prince and Princess of Wales was confirmed years later by one of their children, the Duke of Gloucester, in a conversation with Hannah More. Looking back over the years—years stained by sordid incidents—the Duke wistfully observed :

No boys were ever brought up in a greater ignorance of evil than the King and myself. At fourteen years old we retained all our native innocence.

Children came to the Prince and Princess of Wales at regular intervals. Augusta, later to become the wife of the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, was the child whose life 'Fritz' had risked by that mad drive from Hampton Court to St James's in 1737. George William Frederick, as already mentioned, came prematurely in the following year ; and Edward Augustus, his childhood companion and later the holder of the duchies of York and Albany, in 1739. Elizabeth Caroline, a tragic little figure who in her nineteenth year died of 'an inflammation of the bowels,' appeared in 1741 ; and William Frederick, later to be created Duke of Gloucester and Duke of Edinburgh, in 1743. Henry Frederick, the future Duke of Cumberland, was born in the very year in which his great-uncle namesake earned for himself the title of 'the Butcher'—1745 ; and Frederick William, fated to die as a boy of fifteen, came in 1750. Caroline Matilda, who as the wife of Christian VII of Denmark shared with George regal honours, was a posthumous child, born four months after her father's death.

The Princess was a good mother. In her husband's lifetime she 'discreetly' avoided politics, though she loyally shared her husband's hatred of his father and Walpole. Her duties lay in the nursery, and she never shirked them : her only desire was to bring her children up in the fear and love of God, and to minister to their childish needs.

George William Frederick, in his seventh year, was put under the care of Dr Francis Ayscough, later to be preferred to the Deanery of Bristol. The Doctor, who was a member of 'Fritz's' household and a relation of the Grenvilles, was a man of considerable ability ; but he was a hopeless time-server, and some shared Pelham's conviction that he was also 'a great rogue,' even though he signalized his appointment as Preceptor to the

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young prince with a pious invitation for ‘the prayer of every honest man for the Divine blessing on his endeavours’ in the royal schoolroom. His worthlessness as an educator was quickly realized by the Princess; but she could not persuade ‘Fritz’ to dismiss him, because he was far too useful a member of his household to be offended. The mother’s concern is the better appreciated when it is known that at the age of eleven George was unable to read English!

Perhaps not all the fault was Ayscough’s. ‘Fritz’ had a disconcerting habit of interrupting the studies of his children by ‘casting’ them in private theatrical performances which were staged for the benefit of his friends and their ladies. He took into his service James Quin, rival and friend of Garrick, to teach elocution to the children and coach them in their ‘parts.’ Quin was always proud of the fact that he was responsible for George III’s excellent delivery as a speaker: on hearing everyone praising the young king for the excellence of his first Speech from the Throne, the old actor proudly exclaimed:

Ay, it is I who taught the boy to speak.

It was Quin who staged at Leicester House the performance of Addison’s *Cato* given by the children and their little friends on January 4th, 1749. The cast was as follows:

Cato	Master Nugent
Portius	Prince George
Juba	Prince Edward
Sempronius	Master Evelyn
Lucius	Master Montague
Decius	Lord Milsington
Syphax	Master North
Marcia	Princess Augusta
Lucia	Princess Elizabeth

Prince George spoke the Prologue: his brother, Edward, and his sister, Augusta, shared the Epilogue, which was probably written for the occasion by their father. Everyone was delighted at the way in which the children played their ‘parts’—and particularly with the acting of the Princess Elizabeth Caroline. When announcing her untimely death to Sir Horace Mann in 1759 Horace Walpole recalled the performance of *Cato*:

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I saw her act in "Cato" at eight years old when she could not stand alone but was forced to lean against the side-scene. She had been so unhealthy that at that age she had not been taught to read, but had learned the part of Lucia by hearing the others studying their parts. She went to her father and mother and begged she might act. They put her off as gently as they could; she desired leave to repeat her part; and when she did, it was with so much sense, that there was no denying her.

In the following year the royal children and their playmates presented to an admiring audience Nicholas Rowe's tragedy of *Lady Jane Grey*.

In October 1750 'Fritz' entrusted Francis, Lord North with the control of the children; and in his own hand drew up 'the regulations of the studies of Prince George and Prince Edward.'

Cliften, Octbr the 14th 1750.

The Hours of the Two Eldest Princes.

To get up at 7 o'clock.

At 8 to read with Mr Scot till 9, and he to stay with 'em till the Doctor comes.

The Doctor to stay from 9 till Eleven.

From Eleven to Twelve Mr Fung.

From Twelve to half an hour past Twelve, Ruperti; but Mr Fung to remain there.

Then to be their Play hour till 3 o'clock.

At 3 Dinner.

Three times a week at half past Four Denoyer comes.

At 5 Mr Fung till half an hour past 6.

At half an hour past 6 till 8, Mr Scot.

At 8 Supper.

Between 9 & 10 in Bed.

On Sunday, Prayers at exactly half an hour past 9 above stairs.

Then the two eldest Princes and the two eldest Princesses are to go to Prince George's apartment, to be instructed by Dr Ayscough in the Principles of Religion till 11 o'clock.

For My Lord North.

It was all very comprehensive on paper, but whether or not it amounted to much it is difficult to say. The 'Mr Scot' of 'the regulations' was George Scott, a mathematician of great distinction, who in 1737 had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was a friend of the brilliant but hopelessly dissipated

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Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke, on whose recommendation he undoubtedly came to the Prince's household. 'The Doctor,' to whom the young princes went between 9 and 11, was probably Dr Ayscough, upon whom devolved the ethical side of the education. Mr Fung taught French and German; Ruperti, dancing; and Denoyer or Desnoyer, music.

It was in 1750 that George William Frederick performed what might justifiably be termed his first public duty. On May 13th of that year—'without once complaining or groaning the whole time'—his mother was delivered of another baby boy; and a month later the household was informed that the King—then away in Hanover—approved the scheme that the baby's sponsors at baptism should be 'Prince George, Lady Augusta and a brother of the Princess.' On June 17th, therefore, the baptism took place in Leicester House. Bubb Dodington recorded in his Diary:

The child was christened by the Bishop of Oxford. The Prince George gave the name which was Frederick William. Nobody of either sex was admitted into the room but the actual servants, except the Lord Chief Justice Willes and Sir Luke Schaub.

The 'Sir Luke Schaub' was a close friend of George II, and on this occasion he acted as the proxy for the Princess's brother, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha.

* * *

'FRITZ'S' SUDDEN DEATH cast a terrible gloom over Leicester House. The Princess was so 'afflicted' that during the whole of the night she remained by the body, believing that by some miracle or other her husband would come to life again. George William Frederick cried bitterly; and Dr Ayscough, seeing the distracted boy placing his hand on his breast, asked him if he felt unwell. The reply which he received was:

I feel something here, just as I did when I saw the two workmen fall from the scaffold at Kew.

All through his long life George was to retain that youthful sensitiveness to pain and suffering.

If the King would not allow his son to receive a royal funeral he was ready to behave more sympathetically towards his grand-

children. On learning of 'Fritz's' death he sent one of his household, Lord Lincoln, to offer his condolences to the Princess and her children; and on March 31st he went in person to see them. His heart was touched by the genuine grief which confronted him: refusing the special chair put ready against his coming he sat at the Princess's side on the sofa, and in his rough way—and not without tears—tried to comfort her. To his grandsons he said :

Be brave boys: be obedient to your mother, and endeavour to do credit to the high station to which you are born.

For a moment the interview helped to soften the feelings which George II and his daughter-in-law entertained towards each other. The King did not hesitate to name her as the guardian of the Heir to the Throne.

* * *

BY HEREDITARY RIGHT George William Frederick succeeded at once to certain titles and honours on his father's death. He was Electoral Prince of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Marquis of the Isle of Ely, the Earl of Eltham, the Viscount of Lancastor and the Baron of Snaudon. He had been created a Knight of the Garter during his father's lifetime—an honour which some wit or other made the occasion for a lampoon in which 'Fritz' was brutally reminded of his liking for other sorts of garters.

On April 20th, 1751, the King, by Letters Patent under the Great Seal, created George Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester—honours long reserved to the Heir to the Throne. Two days previously the members of his household were nominated. The Earl of Sussex, Viscount Downe, and Robert, Lord Bertie were appointed Lords of the Bedchamber; and Colonel John Selwyn, who had been one of Marlborough's *aides-de-camp*, undertook the duties of Treasurer.

George, Prince of Wales, was now a person of some importance. In the eyes of that cunning old party manager, the Duke of Newcastle, he was a person of such importance that he could not be allowed to escape from 'the Newcastle influence.' Thus the Duke engineered the dismissal of Lord North from his office of Governor, and replaced him by one of his own creatures—

Simon, Lord Harcourt. The new Governor, who enjoyed a reputation as a hearty eater and a fearless rider to hounds, is said to have thought that he had done his duty when he reminded the young Prince to turn his toes out! Lord Mansfield accurately classified Harcourt when he observed :

He is a cipher, he must be a cipher, and was put in to be a cipher.

Another contemporary described Harcourt as ‘a civil sheepish peer!

Dr Ayscough went with North. His place was taken by Thomas Hayter, Bishop of Norwich, thought to be a natural son of Dr Blackburn, the Archbishop of York, who, according to Horace Walpole, ‘had all the manners of a man of Quality, though he had been a Buccaneer and was a Clergyman.’ Hayter’s scholarship, however, was infinitely superior to that of his predecessor, Ayscough.

The post of Sub-Governor was given to Mr Andrew Stone, a brother of Dr George Stone, the Archbishop of Armagh. He had rendered the King useful service in Hanover, and had acted as private secretary to Newcastle. Horace Walpole, whose estimates of character were invariably coloured by political considerations, regarded Stone as a ‘proud and mercenary man,’ quite unfitted for the delicate task of educating an Heir to the Throne. But Dr Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol, who was a less biased and therefore much sounder judge of character, had a very different opinion of Stone :

A most excellent scholar . . . and withal a man of grave deportment, of good temper, and of the most consummate prudence and discretion.

Incidentally Mr George Scott was retained as Sub-Preceptor.

In less than a year the Prince’s advisers were hopelessly at loggerheads. It is not easy to determine the cause of the trouble, but there is a strong suspicion that at the bottom of it lay the mother’s interference, which was strongly resented by Harcourt and Hayter and more or less approved by Scott and Stone. That the Dowager-Princess was gravely alarmed at the backwardness of the Prince is evident from her private talks with Bubb Dodington : she told this friend of her husband that she wished George ‘was a little more forward and less childish’;

and she was obviously convinced in her own mind, as Dodington's record of the interview shows, that the fault lay in the royal schoolroom.

She said, she did not really well know what they taught him; but, to speak freely, she was afraid not much: that they were in the country and followed their diversions, and not much else that she could discover. . . . Stone was a sensible man, and capable of instructing in things as well as books: that Lord Harcourt and the Prince agreed very well, but she thought that he could not learn much from his lordship; that Scott, in her opinion, was a very proper preceptor; but that for the good bishop, he might be, and she supposed he was, a mighty learned man; but he did not seem to her very proper to convey knowledge to children; he had not the clearness which she thought necessary: she did not very well comprehend him herself, his thoughts seemed to be too many for his words.

In a subsequent talk with Dodington she observed that

the Bishop was teaching them Logick, which, as she was told, was a very odd study for children of their age, not to say, of their condition.

It is quite clear, therefore, that in this squabble in the royal schoolroom the Dowager-Princess took sides.

Bad teaching is often used by fond parents to cover up the intellectual deficiencies of their children. Prince George was backward: his mother was convinced that the fault lay with Harcourt and Hayter. She may not have been wrong in her assumption. Harcourt's insufficiency as an educator must be admitted, and scholarly though Hayter undoubtedly was, it is quite possible that he was quite incapable of imparting his knowledge to young children. Scott and Stone were subordinate to Harcourt and Hayter; and they could only do what they were told.

Harcourt's treatment of the Dowager-Princess probably had much to do with the quarrel. He never tried to win her confidence: on the contrary, he took an almost childish delight in slighting her. He complained about her card parties, which in such a strictly ordered household must have been innocent enough; and whenever he visited the Prince he never paid his respects to the mother. The Dowager-Princess was a woman

of strong resentments. She sensed—and perhaps rightly too—that Harcourt and Hayter were not only deliberately trying to undermine the Prince's love for his mother but also to detach him from all who had enjoyed his dead father's favours. Such an achievement would have given Newcastle the greatest pleasure; and Harcourt and Hayter were aware that the Duke was in the habit of rewarding loyal service generously.

The Dowager-Princess has often been blamed for the way in which she attached Prince George and his brothers and sisters to her apron-strings. But what alternatives were open to her? Either she must allow them to pass into the care of a self-centred grandfather, whose court was rotten with vice; or sit quietly by while they were reduced to puppets by a political caucus, which had heaped every form of indignity upon their father. Her conception of motherhood made it impossible for her to agree to the one; the love for her dead husband, to the other.

In the eighteenth century it was impossible to keep from the country the differences which existed at Court. The quarrel of Prince George's tutors quickly became public property, and therefore the cause of unseemly political wranglings. Stone was accused of being a Jacobite: he was said to have drunk the Pretender's health in company with Mr Solicitor-General Murray [later Lord Mansfield] and Dr James Johnson, Bishop of Gloucester. The Whigs, stalwart defenders of the Hanoverian Succession, howled for his dismissal. Stone denied the accusation; and at the same time charged Hayter with violently attempting to remove him from the royal schoolroom—a tit-bit which was mercilessly used by the Tories to demonstrate the Bishop's unfitness for the office of Preceptor to the Heir to the Throne. Harcourt joined forces with Hayter: they asseverated that not only had Scott and Stone conspired together to instil into the mind of the young Prince a knowledge of arbitrary principles of government, but the latter had even allowed him to read some noxious books, among which was *Revolutions d'Angleterre*, a 'most damnable book,' in which Pere d'Orleans had fabricated a defence of James II's unconstitutionalism. All good Whigs were horrified: to them it was quite clear that Scott and Stone must be removed from the Prince's presence.

Harcourt brought these charges to the King's notice in a personal interview, and George II very rightly referred the

whole matter to his advisers. But even Newcastle was compelled to admit that a mountain had been made out of a molehill; and the King immediately shared his view. Harcourt and Hayter, however, were not to be so easily put off. They repeated the charges against Scott and Stone, and declared that they would resign unless the two men, and their friend, Cresset, who was the Dowager-Princess's private secretary, were summarily dismissed. The appearance of Cresset is interesting. According to Waldegrave, whose dislike of the Dowager-Princess was often extended to her friends and servants, Cresset was 'a cautious man, uncommonly skilful in the politics of the backstairs'; and he probably was the link between the mother and the two men whom she sincerely believed were doing their best to educate Prince George.

Harcourt and Hayter had shot their bolt: their demand that the King and his Ministers should dismiss Scott, Stone and Cresset was ignored, with the result that they themselves had no alternative but to resign. Their friends did their utmost to inflame public opinion against the Government. An anonymous communication, thought to have been 'fabricated by Horace Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford,' was sent to Dr Thomas Newton, a popular preacher who in addition to being one of the King's chaplains held the living of St George's, Hanover Square, to Lord Ravensworth and to General Henry Hawley. Whether it was 'fabricated' by Walpole or by some other Whig publicist is a matter of little importance: despite the fact that tremendous emphasis was laid upon the danger to the Hanoverian Succession from allowing the Prince to be controlled by men like Scott and Stone little notice was taken of the infuriated Whig vapourings. It is true, that some time after the incident of the 'dismissals' the Duke of Bedford raised the matter in the House of Lords; but his motion was hopelessly defeated. The country generally was becoming blissfully indifferent to the squabbles which regularly disturbed the households of their Hanoverian kings and princes!

* * *

THE KING AND his Ministers found that it was no easy matter to replace Harcourt. Distinguished noblemen were approached, but they politely refused the honour, knowing that acceptance

would not only jeopardize their political futures but also bring them into conflict with that powerful ‘backstairs’ influence cunningly controlled by the Dowager-Princess. Even Lord Waldegrave, who was finally selected for the post, confessed to a friend :

If I dared I would make this excuse to the King—“I am too young to govern, and too old to be governed.”

The new Governor, then in his thirty-seventh year, was everywhere accepted as an amiable man of the world, who was a good judge of wine and women and a gracious host. Years afterwards Prince George remarked that Waldegrave ‘was a depraved and worthless man.’

Hayter’s place was taken by Dr John Thomas, then Bishop of Peterborough but later to be translated first to Salisbury and then to Winchester. He was a most estimable man—scholarly, mild-mannered and fond of children; and his only defect appears to have been the suspicion that he was ‘too Tory.’

The Whigs were certainly put out by these appointments. Waldegrave, although he had long been in the service of George II and was a good Protestant in the sense that he accepted the Hanoverian Succession and listened to the dronings of Latitudinarian divines, came from Papist stock. Good Whigs shook their heads, and said that it was a dangerous business to put such a man over a household which was permeated with Jacobitism. But the King’s mind was made up: he was determined to make an end of these classroom squabbles; and in his view—and in the view of his Ministers—Waldegrave was the right man in the right place.

Waldegrave soon took accurate measure of the situation in his new ‘province.’ The Prince was backward at his lessons; and was altogether a namby-pamby, completely dominated by his mother. The new Governor noted :

I found His Royal Highness uncommonly full of princely prejudices contracted in the Nursery, and improved by Bedchamber Women and Pages of the Backstairs.

Not that Waldegrave was unappreciative of the godly way in which the young Prince had been nurtured by his adoring mother; but as a man of the world, intimately acquainted with

court life and politics, he was bound to recognize that the office of kingship called for a form of education which went far outside the limits of 'the nursery.' It is evident that 'the mother and the nursery' were too strong for Waldegrave; and as a result he grew bitterly resentful towards the former and abandoned all hope of ever being able to exert his influence in the latter.

The new Preceptor, on the other hand, did his utmost to make good some of the Prince's educational deficiencies. He persuaded Dr Tucker, the learned Dean of Gloucester, to prepare an account 'on the Subject of National Commerce'; but although the Dean actually commenced work he declined to proceed with it 'for very judicious reasons.' Tucker was too good an economist to write a treatise to please all political parties! The Prince was not a good pupil: he was lazy in the classroom, and paid little attention to his teachers.

When Bubb Dodington visited the Dowager-Princess at her request early in 1753 he was delighted to find that she was pleased with the new appointments. Of Waldegrave she said that although she herself was 'but little acquainted with him' he struck her as a man who 'was very well bred, very complaisant and attentive'; and, what was far more important, 'the children liked him extremely.' Nevertheless Prince George's backwardness continued to trouble her; and she was also disturbed because her boys were so obviously unacquainted with the world.

In a previous interview Dodington had endeavoured to persuade the Dowager-Princess that it was time for Prince George to 'begin to learn the usages and knowledge of the world'; but he had then received the unanswerable reply that such a thing was impossible, because 'the young people of quality were so ill-educated and so very vicious that they frightened her.' Like many another mother the Dowager-Princess was afraid to allow her children to take the normal risks of life—risks which she herself had magnified into the most terrible pitfalls and evils. In her heart of hearts she knew that she was wrong: to Bubb Dodington on May 27th, 1755, she confided that

she was highly sensible how necessary it was that the Prince should keep company with men; she knew well that women could not inform him, but if it was in her power absolutely, to whom could

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she address him? What company could she wish him to keep? What friendships desire he should contract?

That was her problem; and the obsession of a wicked world made solution impossible. To Dodington she remarked on that same occasion:

Such was the universal profligacy, such the character and conduct of the young people of distinction, that she was really afraid to have them near her children.

Perhaps the Dowager-Princess was less afraid of the World and the Devil than she was of the Flesh. She was afraid that women would exert a malign influence over her sons; and she had a low opinion of her own sex. She said to Dodington:

The behaviour of the women was indecent, low and much against their interest, by making themselves so very cheap.

In truth, she feared that her eldest son and his brothers might inherit their father's, grandfather's and great-grandfather's love of wenching.

She soon lost confidence in Waldegrave, again because he tried to cut the Prince free from her apron-strings. He was, in her eyes, a 'spy' put into her home by the King and her husband's enemies. Waldegrave thereupon lost interest in his work: he was aware that the King, his mind centred upon Hanover and fat mistresses, was quite indifferent to the educational progress of his grandson, and since the line of least resistance enabled him more comfortably to pursue his own pleasures the Governor took his duties quite complacently.

The one man who might have helped to mould the Prince's character was his uncle, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. But his sister-in-law hated him: the country had been taught to regard him as 'the Butcher,' so savagely had he dealt with the rebels of Scotland during the 'Forty-five. He was nevertheless an able man, whose greatest crime was his attempt to ensure that the officers in the Army did their duty! He was large-minded, not more vicious than the best of his contemporaries, and essentially a man of the world. But politically he had steered himself into a backwater, with the result that he was excluded from membership of the Commission of Regency

set up against the emergency of George II dying while Prince George was a minor; and he played into the hands of his enemies by taking the exclusion badly.

That Cumberland's character had been presented to his young nephews and nieces in the most unfavourable terms is certain, and the blame for this must lie at the door of the Dowager-Princess. To them, as to many other children, he was a real 'bogey man,' who slew in cold blood little children and their mothers. They may have heard how when the liverymen of the City of London were discussing a proposal to make Cumberland a freeman of one of the city companies an alderman had solemnly suggested that the only suitable company for so distinguished a prince was 'the Butchers!' Anyhow, Prince George was afraid of his uncle: on one occasion when he was visiting him the Duke took down a sword to show the boy, and to his horror he found that the little fellow had turned pale. 'What have they told the boy about me?' he asked; and it was not necessary for those about him to supply the answer. Nor did any good come of his protest to his sister-in-law that the children ought to be brought up to treat their uncle properly.

In 1754 Prince George launched a man-o'-war. He was attended by his brothers and his uncle, Cumberland, who 'showed himself a very dutiful uncle, much to the edification of the multitude.' Cumberland used the occasion to make Sir Percy Brett, R.N., recount to the boys his experiences during the memorable engagement between his ship H.M.S. *Lion* and the French man-o'-war the *Elizabeth*, acting as a convoy to the brig *Doutelle* on board of which was the Young Pretender bound for Scotland and the 'Forty-five. It was a story which had been told time and again from one end of the kingdom to the other: it could not fail to arouse all the enthusiasms of healthy boyhood. Had the Dowager-Princess been a wiser woman she would have allowed her sons to see more of their uncle, who could have told them scores of similar tales of service and derring-do.

In the following year Prince George performed a very different public duty. In the company of his mother he paid a formal call on Dr Thomas Herring, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at his residence at Croydon. In a letter to his friend, Lord

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Chancellor Hardwicke, the Archbishop gave a full account of the visit :

They were escorted, if I might say, through the court by a company of Buffs, and the regiment was drawn up in the town with all the officers attending, so that all military honours were paid them. I met the Princess at the coach door, and conducted her by her hand up to the apartment. She stayed a little in the drawing room, and then moved to the coffee and tea in the gallery, with which the table was partly furnished ; but a dessert of the best fruit I could get, completed the figure, such as it was. She was so gracious as to order us to sit, but nobody had an elbow chair but the Prince of Wales and the Princess. They ate a good breakfast, and I was glad of that. After some little pause her Royal Highness desired to walk round the garden and we took the opportunity of the gilded moment. She then returned to the house and received the compliments of Colonel Howard and the officers. I reconducted her to her coach in my very best manner.

Is it not here made clear how completely the Heir to the Throne was overshadowed by his mother ?

* * *

THE MOTHER'S INFLUENCE over her son was strengthened by the support which it received from John Stuart, Earl of Bute. He had come into contact with the family by an accident. 'Fritz' was a great patron of cricket. Rain had put a stop to play in a match which he was watching ; and as there was nothing better to do he decided to pass the time at whist. Bute was watching the same match ; and when 'Fritz' found that he could not make up his table from among his attendants he asked Bute to join him. From that moment Bute was in high favour with the father and mother of the future George III.

In 1750 he was appointed one of the Lords of the Bedchamber in 'Fritz's' household ; and soon after the Prince's death it was whispered that he had actually become the widow's paramour. Whether the gossips' tongues wagged truthfully or not will never be known ; but Waldegrave certainly had no doubt that Bute was the Dowager-Princess's lover. He put his opinion rather quaintly : the Dowager-Princess, he said,

has discovered other accomplishments, of which the Prince her husband may not have been the most competent judge.

Horace Walpole, who was never happier than when he was wallowing in scandal, was more emphatic about the *affaire*. He wrote :

I am as much convinced of the amorous connection between Bute and the Princess Dowager as if I had seen them together.

These allegations, coming slyly down backstairs in the homes of the Dowager-Princess's and Bute's detractors, and being suitably coloured in servants' quarters, were served out to the public in the filthiest forms.

But it is difficult to believe that there was any justification for the contemporary suspicion. Bute admittedly was an attractive man. Waldegrave records that he 'has a good person, fine legs, and a theatrical air of the greatest importance': Horace Walpole admits that 'he was a man of taste and science.' The world is notoriously uncharitable in its judgements of friendships which trespass outside the married state, assuming without evidence that guilty liaisons exist, whereas in actual fact the relationships are merely platonic friendships, founded upon the highest motives. Platonic friendships are eagerly sought after by lonely people; and the Dowager-Princess was definitely a lonely woman. It is unbelievable that a woman of her high moral code and stern Lutheranism should invite Bute to share her bed: it is more reasonable—and decidedly more charitable—to suppose that she surrendered to him not her body but her confidence.

Bute was a Scot and a Tory. Both qualifications would bring down upon his head the most scurrilous wrath of the Whigs. He was known, too, to hold views on government which were deemed to be dangerous because they asserted the right of the king to govern his realm, and not to be governed by party managers, whose manipulation of politics brought the Constitution into contempt. There is little doubt that Bute himself was loyally attached to the principles of the Glorious Revolution; but he believed that Whiggery had violated those principles by abuses of its political power; and he was determined to readjust the balances by pumping into the head of the young Prince the Tory conception of kingship, as neatly defined in Bolingbroke's *The Patriot King* and the *Commentaries* of the learned lawyer, Sir William Blackstone.

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The Dowager-Princess readily accepted Bute's views. She also encouraged him to impress them upon the mind of her eldest son, whom she envisaged as a king in deed as well as in name, rising high above the sordid level of party politics and ministering to the needs of his countrymen—as a king should—in a noble and disinterested way. Thus both the Dowager-Princess and Bute were accused by contemporaries of keeping the Prince to themselves. Some of their enemies went so far as to suggest that they had a diabolical purpose in mind: to keep the Prince in such a state of ignorance of affairs that he must virtually surrender all his royal power into their hands. Junius, at a later date, in his famous *Address to the King* likened the Dowager-Princess and Bute to Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin and to Edward II's queen, Isabella, and her paramour, Roger Mortimer; and he urged George to be a Louis XIV or an Edward III. But such a charge is better political fuel than sound judgement. It is a tribute to ability which neither the Dowager-Princess nor Bute possessed.

But the King, who never really liked his daughter-in-law, was at last genuinely alarmed at the tales which were brought to him of the condition of affairs in the household of the Heir to the Throne. In 1755 he sent for the Prince, as Waldegrave explains,

to find out the extent of his political knowledge, to sift him in relation to Hanover, and to caution him against evil counsellors.

The interview was a complete fiasco. It was inevitable probably that it should be, for the King had only recently returned from one of his visits to Hanover, and he was always testy and overbearing towards those with whom he came into contact after his arrival in the land he so heartily detested. Waldegrave relates:

The Prince was flustered and sulky; bowed, but scarce made any answer: so that the conference ended very little to the satisfaction to either party.

Was this the occasion when the King lost his temper and struck the Prince? Years afterwards, when the Duke of Sussex [George III's sixth son] was visiting Hampton Court he observed to a friend:

MOTHER'S APRON-STRINGS

I wonder in which of these rooms it was that George the Second struck my father. The blow so disgusted him with the place that he could never afterwards be induced to think of it as a residence.

Quite rightly Waldegrave thought that the King should have had a heart-to-heart talk about the Prince with his mother; and hinted that her compliance with the royal wishes might easily have been secured 'by whispering a word in her ear, which would have made her tremble, in spite of her spotless innocence.' An allusion, obviously, to the so-called intrigue with Bute.

The King's alarm grew when they told him that his daughter-in-law was planning a marriage for her eldest son. He was violently angry when he learnt that her heart was set upon a bride from her own family of Saxe-Gotha. He disliked that family intensely: he believed that its members were tainted by a congenital disease. Obviously the time had come for him to bestir himself. He had apparently, during his visit to Hanover in 1755, chosen a bride for his grandson, either Sophia Caroline Maria or Anna Amelia [preferably the former] of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. Their mother had brought the girls to see the old King; and he was so charmed by them that he declared that he would have married the elder himself had he been twenty years younger! George II had a great liking for plump young women!

The news of the King's interest in the Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel princesses greatly alarmed the Dowager-Princess. On August 6th, 1755, she had a confidential talk with Bubb Dodington on the subject. Surely, she said, the King would not arrange a marriage without first consulting her? Dodington tried to calm her fears: he was convinced that 'nothing will be settled in Hanover,' but on his return the King might tell the Dowager-Princess that he wished to 'see the Prince settled before his death,' and that he thought that one of the Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel princesses would be a suitable consort. The Dowager-Princess was not so easily reassured: she flatly told Dodington that her father-in-law 'was not that sort of man.' But she would not give in without a struggle: if the King, so Dodington records,

should settle the match without acquainting her with it, she should let him know how ill she took it; and if he did it in the manner I [Dodington] mentioned, she should not fail to tell him fairly and plainly that it was full early.

There is something pathetic in her arguments. She had other children, and the King ought to provide for them, and not burden Prince George with their future. ‘The match was premature,’ because it would prevent the Prince from mixing with the world, so necessary for a ‘shy and backward’ boy. The Prince’s own wishes ought to be considered: he was ‘much averse to’ the marriage. She told Dodington nothing but good of the princesses’ father—‘a very worthy man’; but if the intended bride took after her mother—well ‘she will never do here.’ The Dowager-Princess at once satisfied Dodington’s curiosity: the Duchess of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, she said, was

the most intriguing, meddling, and also the most satirical, sarcastical person in the world, and will always make mischief wherever she comes.

In her opinion, the match was unthinkable: it would not only ‘hurt’ the Prince ‘in his publick, but make him uneasy in his private, situation.’

The Dowager-Princess was aware that her eldest son was not like other boys.

He was not a wild and dissipated boy, but good natured and cheerful, with a serious outlook upon the whole [*sic*]—that those about him knew him no more than if they had never seen him. . . . He was not quick, but with those he was acquainted, applicable and intelligent. His education had given her much pain; his book learning she was no judge of, though she supposed it was small or useless; but she hoped he might have been instructed in the general understanding of things.

The thought of parting from him and of seeing him bestow his love upon another woman aroused the mother’s possessive instinct in her. She would keep him to herself as long as she could: if in the interests of State he must marry then she, and not her father-in-law and his Ministers, would arrange it.

Waldegrave records how the King’s designs were frustrated. Those about the Prince—doubtless at the mother’s orders—‘most cruelly misrepresented’ the Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel princess, whose ‘perfections were aggravated into faults.’ The Prince believed every word uttered by her detractors; and Horace Walpole relates that

MOTHER'S APRON-STRINGS

Her ladyship's boy declares violently against being *bewolfenbüttled*—a word which I do not pretend to understand as it is not in Mr Johnson's New Dictionary.

In the face of such cunningly conceived opposition what could the King do but to abandon the project?

* * *

By ACT OF Parliament it was decreed that the Heir to the Throne should attain his majority on his eighteenth birthday—June 4th, 1756. The Prince had become a good-looking young man; and he was probably not nearly as big a fool as his mother thought him. His Sub-Preceptor, Scott, told his friend, Mrs Calderwood of Polton, that at eighteen the Prince was

a lad of very good principles. Good natured, and extremely honest; has no heroic strain, but loves peace, and has no turn for extravagance; modest and has no tendency to vice, and has as yet very virtuous principles; has the greatest temptation to gallant with the ladies, who lay themselves out in the most shameful manner to draw him in, but to no purpose.

Such was the verdict of one who knew the Prince intimately.

Now that the Prince was 'of full age' the King quite rightly made another attempt to wean him from his mother. Waldegrave was instructed to inform the young man that for the future he would receive from his grandfather an allowance of £40,000 a year to meet the expenses of his household; but at the same time he would be required to occupy apartments in the palaces at St James's and Kensington, which the King would have suitably prepared for him. The Prince graciously thanked the King for the promised allowance; but he regretted that he could not possibly live at either St James's or Kensington because that would mean parting from his mother, and for this reason he trusted that the King would not press the matter further.

George II was an irascible little man; and his views on filial obedience in others contrasted strangely with his unnatural behaviour towards his own father. If the Prince refused to do his bidding and leave his mother, then the King would withhold the promised allowance until he yielded to the royal command. But the Ministers were not prepared to support such drastic action. To revoke the grant to the Prince would im-

mediately play into the hands of their political opponents, who would lose no time in inflaming the country against the King and the Government. The Prince was no longer a minor : he was a man, and he had a perfect right to order his life in his own way. In truth, the Ministers were on the horns of a dilemma. They realized that to support the King would offend the Prince, who on his accession to the throne would take his revenge by dismissing them from office—and office in the eighteenth century could be made a lucrative source of personal enrichment and the advancement of friends.

Therefore the Prince had his way, and continued to live with his mother. He registered another victory over the old King when he demanded that Bute should be appointed Groom of the Stole. George II fumed and raged when the demand was made of him, but it was all to no purpose, although in the end he derived a certain amount of satisfaction from his refusal personally to bestow the badge of office upon his daughter-in-law's favourite.

The time had come for the Prince to have a properly constituted household. Francis Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon, the son of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who dabbled in religion and made socially respectable the teachings of Mr Wesley and Mr Whitefield, was appointed to be Master of the Horse. The Earls of Pembroke and Euston and Lord Digby were created Lords of the Bedchamber; and Allen, Earl Bathurst, renowned for his patronage of poets and wits and his interest in arboriculture, became the Treasurer. All were the kind of people to make the most of such honours ; but none was ever an intimate of the young Prince, who turned more and more to Bute for guidance and friendship.

Waldegrave's services were no longer required ; and on Bute's appointment he quitted the office in which he had never been happy or comfortable. In his Memoirs he wrote :

I made my bow, and parted from him [the Prince] with as much indifference as was consistent with respect and decency.

Mother and son were delighted to see the back of a man whom they disliked so intensely.

Bute's growing influence in the Prince's household was at once jealously noted, and almost certainly maliciously exaggerated,

by his political enemies. Philip Dormer Stanhope, who secretly liked to consider himself a second Ovid, states:

The Princess Dowager and Lord Bute agreed to keep the Prince to themselves. None but their immediate and lowest creatures were suffered to approach him. Except at his levees, where none are seen as they are, he saw nobody and none saw him.

Chesterfield was not the kind of man to appreciate the charming simplicity of the home life of the future king; and he probably would have been kinder in his judgements had it boasted a *seraglio* managed by Whig noblemen!

* * *

A LATER GENERATION were taught to believe that at least once in his life George III, the model of middle-class propriety, had kicked over the traces. They were told that he had had, as a young man, an *affaire* with a 'fair Quaker,' Hannah Lightfoot by name, whose father, hailing from Yorkshire, kept a shop near Execution Dock in Wapping. Hannah was in the habit of visiting an uncle of the name of Wheeler, who owned a fashionable linen drapery business in the neighbourhood of Leicester House; and it was during one of her visits to these relations that the Prince accidentally met her. Charmed by her exquisite beauty he was determined to see more of her. He took into his confidence a former maid-of-honour to his mother, Elizabeth Chudleigh, a lady of the easiest virtue, whose bigamous marriage to the Duke of Kingston provided Society in the seventeen-sixties and seventeen-seventies with its choicest morsel of scandal. Miss Chudleigh appears to have experienced little difficulty in 'procuring' Hannah for the Prince. This meant that she must leave home, which was done very secretly and much to the grief of her parents who advertised fruitlessly for her in the Press.

It is difficult accurately to discover precisely when the *affaire* is supposed to have begun; but it was in or about 1754, when Prince George was in his fifteenth year. Nor was that the end of the business. In the presence of Mr Pitt [later Earl of Chatham] and one Anne Taylor the young lovers were quietly and secretly married by Dr James Wilmot, D.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and Rector of Barton-on-the-Heath and Aulcester.

But their secret leaked out, and there was a tremendous to-do in court circles, particularly when the lady showed indications of producing a family. Hannah was thereupon married to Isaac Axford, a very worthy fellow, who was deserted at the altar or very soon afterwards; while his ‘wife’ went to live in the house of ‘one Perryn of Knightsbridge,’ where Prince George regularly visited her. She produced, in the course of time, a number of children.

When the young lover ascended the throne it was impossible to allow a love dream to cloud his public life; and Hannah was quietly spirited away, so that the King could never find her, although all the time she was living contentedly ‘in the district of Cat-and-Fiddle Fields, on the East side of Hackney Road, leading from Mile End Road.’ George married Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz; and it was not until she was in the family way with the future William IV that she learnt of her husband’s previous ‘marriage.’ So distressed was the poor Queen that she insisted upon being re-married to the King there and then, and Dr Wilmot was sent for to perform the ceremony.

In the eighteen-twenties and eighteen-thirties, when the stock of the Hanoverians was at its lowest, there were not wanting people ready to accept this story, which was duly embellished by picturesque variations and supported by seemingly ‘irrefutable’ proofs. And because it was believed it cannot be dismissed off-hand as a piece of mischievous scandal, concocted by opponents of the Monarchy. The implications are too serious: if George III and Hannah Lightfoot were lawfully wedded man and wife it followed that their children were legitimate, whereas those produced by Queen Charlotte were bastards; for the original marriage had been contracted prior to the passing of the Royal Marriage Act.

Mention of the *affaire* was apparently first made in 1776; when *The Citizen* made an allusion to the King’s liaison with Hannah Lightfoot; and three years later it was also stated that prior to his marriage with Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz the King had kept a ‘mistress’ who was a member of ‘the body of people called Quakers.’ Then in 1821 and 1822 the *affaire* provided the editor of *The Monthly Magazine* with some of the most sensational ‘copy’ ever published in a British newspaper or magazine. Three years later [1824] *An Historical*

*Fragment relative to her late Majesty Queen Caroline transformed Hannah from a mistress into a wife; and a similar tale was retold in 1832 in *Authentic Records of the Court of England* and *A Secret History of the Court of England from the Accession of George the Third to the Death of George*, scurrilous works which were promptly and rightly suppressed.*

The point to be decided is whether or not there is any truth in these stories. It is certainly not a difficult matter to rebut the so-called evidence of George III's traducers. George Scott, who as Sub-Preceptor was in daily contact with the Prince, stressed his complete indifference to feminine charms; and while this testimony might be used as evidence of constancy for one particular love it agrees with all that is known of the Prince's youth—that he was a rather dull and priggish young man, who was far too shy to have an *affaire de cœur*. And his mother, once she had got wind of the secret meetings, would certainly have stopped them. The strongest evidence in George's favour is the fact that Horace Walpole makes no mention of Hannah Lightfoot. Walpole loved nosing into other people's affairs, and such a tit-bit would have sent him into ecstasies of delight, so thoroughly did he dislike George III. And is it easy to picture Mr Pitt acting as the principal witness of a union which was so patently a *mésalliance* for the Heir to the Throne? There seems little doubt that the scandal of the 'marriage' was fabricated by George IV's more relentless enemies, who sought to damn him in the eyes of the world by besmirching the fair name of his father.

George III in his youth may have been attracted by a young lady who went periodically to visit relatives in the neighbourhood of Leicester House. He may even have spoken with her. He was always a most accessible Prince, who brooked no barriers between himself and his humblest subjects. But was there a Hannah Lightfoot? Those who have examined the case carefully are by no means certain that the lady existed; and if she did not exist, then she could never have been his mistress, much less his wife! The time-honoured principle of British justice—that no man can be convicted on suspicion—demands that George III be acquitted on the charges levelled against him; and it is our duty to put him back into History without a stain on his moral character.

* * *

WAR CAME TO Europe in 1756. Within a year the British public was fast in the toils of the war-mongering Mr Pitt, who dangled before the eyes of his fellow-countrymen alluring visions of Empire and calmly paid the Prussian Frederick the Great to fight Britain's battles in Europe and sent well-chosen men to sweep the French out of Canada and India, so that those visions might become realities. His personality dominated the political scene : his fearless eye and terrible sarcasm silenced all opposition.

There was no time, and little inclination, to bother about an Heir to the Throne who preferred to dally with his mother and Bute rather than take his part like a man in public affairs. But the Prince was not nearly as great a ninny as people thought. In the harassing years of war he was by a variety of means fitting himself for the great task which lay before him. Perhaps the preparation was not all that it should have been—in Whig eyes ! Bute was a dangerous tutor : his ideas and ideals were not those which a prince of the House of Hanover ought to adopt. It would have surprised many to find that the ninny of the Prince was by no means uninterested in contemporary events ; and if, as Scott told Mrs Calderwood, he had 'no heroic strain' he was none the less keenly interested in the course of the war. He may not have been as keenly interested as his royal grandfather, whose views on military affairs were those of a man who thought himself one of the foremost generals of the age ; and the Prince probably did not treat his friends, as George II did, to illogical criticisms of the moves of the men on the spot and ill-argued reasons why he could have done much better than they did, had he only been young enough [and permitted by Mr Pitt!] to take charge of the conduct of military operations.

It was in the war period that Bute is said to have taken the Prince into Scotland—a dangerous thing to do at a time when the normal Englishman would have cheerfully preferred to go to Hell than north of the Tweed. The trip was a quiet one in every way : the Scots had not yet learnt to regard with affection the House of Hanover. Companionship is always best nurtured by travel ; and it is not difficult to picture the Prince and Bute using the occasion to talk about many things and particularly of the future.

The King was old : he had never been popular. Cumberland was under a cloud : he had concluded the Convention of Klosterseven, and thereby permitted the French to occupy

Hanover. Not that the British public cared much about the 'miserable electorate'; but it was in a sense British, and a French occupation was a desecration by a much-hated foe. The Prince, on the other hand, was young and fair to look upon; and the British public is peculiarly attracted to young princes. His popularity grew; and when in 1759 he celebrated his birthday the Londoners gave him a rousing reception in the form of street illuminations and much good-natured hooliganism in the thoroughfares.

1759 was a wonderful year for the British public. Victory followed victory with astounding rapidity. Captured flags were paraded through London. 'Rule Britannia' and 'Hearts of Oak' were lustily sung in street and tavern. Ill-conditioned country gentlemen sweated the port out of their bodies by drilling awkward squads of militiamen. Women joined forces with the recruiting-sergeants in pressing men into the King's service. Therefore, in 1759 the young Prince besought his grandfather to give him military employment. Newcastle himself thought that the request was 'very respectful and submissive,' but George II regarded it as a piece of rank impertinence, and being a very obstinate man nothing could alter his opinion. The King was convinced that the Dowager-Princess and Bute had put the Prince up to making the request, in the belief that military service would still further enhance the young man's chances of becoming the idol of the people. Whether his suspicions were right or wrong his subsequent churlish refusal merely detracted from his own popularity; for his decision was quickly known in the streets and the popular sympathy was with the Prince. The political 'managers' at Leicester House naturally would not allow the incident to pass unheeded. They presented the Prince as a much-abused Heir to the Throne, upon whom insults were gratuitously heaped by a most unnatural grandfather and a group of incompetent Ministers. They had not the wit to see that behind George II's refusal to give the Prince a command was an awful fear that the royal reputation as a soldier might be endangered; and they had not the courtesy to allow the old King to remain alone with his memories.

So a lot of political mud was thrown; and much bad feeling was engendered. Fortunately the incident lost much of its importance because it was quickly obscured by the turmoil of war.

Jack-boot and Petticoat

GEORGE II was an extremely methodical man. He rose early in the morning, took plenty of exercise, and ate sparingly; for he had a horror of obesity. His indulgence with women had taken surprisingly little toll of his physical strength; and in 1760, when in his seventy-seventh year, he was hale and hearty, except that blindness was creeping over his eyes and he was becoming a little hard of hearing. There was no indication of a sudden death.

But on October 25th death cut him down. He had risen at his usual hour of six; had made his customary inquiry about the direction of the wind; had sipped his chocolate; and on rising and seeing that the weather was fair he had informed his valet that he would take a walk in Kensington Gardens. The valet busied himself with his duties, moving in and out of the royal bedroom: the King had gone to the w.c. in his dressing-room. Suddenly Schroder [such was the valet's name] heard a noise 'like the falling of a billet of wood from the fire.' He went in to see what had happened, and found the King upon the floor in a state of collapse. The household surgeons were quickly summoned. Lady Yarmouth—the Walmoden of his later amours—slipped in to see what all the commotion was about. The surgeons bled him, but he would not bleed; and in a very little time the end came. The Walmoden slunk back to her apartment; and her place was taken by the dead King's daughter, the Princess Amelia, whose short-sightedness and deafness made her at first oblivious of the fact that she was in the presence of Death.

Schroder, the valet, knew his duty. On a piece of brown paper he scrawled his name, and gave the paper to a messenger with orders to ride hell for leather to Kew to tell Prince George

that his grandfather was dying. It was ‘at a little after eight’ when the messenger came upon the Prince and one or two attendants riding ‘between Kew Bridge and the Six milestone.’ He gave his credentials to Mr Breton, one of the Prince’s party; and was at once brought forward to tell his story. The Prince knew that it would never do to make it known that his grandfather was *in extremis*; and giving out that his horse had fallen lame he rode back to Kew to await the news which would summon him to kingship. About nine o’clock there came another messenger to the palace, this time with a letter from the Princess Amelia, saying that the King was dead; and within an hour the indefatigable Mr Pitt, in his ‘chariot’ on which were posted his servants in blue and silver livery, arrived to greet his new master, and to learn what was his will.

The Prince and Mr Pitt returned to the capital: it was still unknown that the King was dead. Mr Pitt was ordered to summon a meeting of the Privy Council at Savile House, where for some little time previously the Prince had resided; but the order was countermaned because ‘he had no servants in Town and did not chuse to appear at such a period too much in the Streets,’ and the meeting took place in Carleton House, the residence of his mother. It was an indication, which probably no one bothered to notice, of the continued attachment to the apron-strings.

Before the members assembled Newcastle had an audience. The Prince was very considerate to one who had served his family so faithfully, if so incompetently. Wrote the Duke to his friend Hardwicke :

His Majesty informed me that he had always a very good opinion of me, and that he knew my constant zeal for his family, and my duty to his grandfather, which he thought would be pledges of my zeal for him.

But Newcastle’s pleasure was quickly enveloped in doubts, when he was told on parting from his new master:

‘My Lord Bute is your good friend: he will tell you my thoughts. The Duke did not like Bute, who was a Tory and a Scotsman. So he wailed:

God knows, and my friends know, the distress I am in!
The Duke had read plainly the writing on the wall.

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Mr Pitt was the next to receive a shock. With infinite pains he had prepared a little speech for the young man who was shortly to be proclaimed their King; but he was politely informed that he had laboured in vain. The Prince

had previously viewed the subject with some attention, and had himself already prepared the heads of what he would say at the Council table.

Such independence in a sovereign had not been known since George I came to the throne; and it filled the Whigs, who had grown accustomed to the exercise of all regal rights and prerogatives, with considerable dismay. What would come next?

The Prince handled his first Council meeting splendidly. His speech was succinct and clearly enunciated.

The loss that I and the nation have sustained by the death of the King, my grandfather, would have been severely felt at any time; but coming at so critical a juncture, and so unexpected, it is by many circumstances augmented, and the weight now falling on me much increased: I feel my own insufficiency to support it as I wish; but, animated by the tenderest affection for my native country, and by depending upon the advice, experience, and abilities of your lordships; on the support of every honest man; I enter with cheerfulness into this arduous situation, and shall make it the business of my life to promote, in every thing, the glory and happiness of these kingdoms, to preserve and strengthen the constitution in both church and state; and, as I mount the throne in the midst of an expensive, but just and necessary war, I shall endeavour to prosecute it in a manner the most likely to bring on an honourable and lasting peace, in concert with my allies.

The company bowed solemnly: no one ventured a word of criticism.

Whether Mr Pitt's contention that the new sovereign had used the word 'a bloody war' is right or wrong is a matter of small consequence. There was a definite challenge to the war party in the King's Speech; and Pitt was quick enough of brain to see it. The young Prince, whom all the world had been brought up to believe was a namby-pamby, had stated emphatically that he would conduct the war *in a manner the most likely to bring on an honourable and lasting peace*. Pitt knew that peace was still a

long way off—at least the kind of peace which he had set his heart upon concluding.

On the next day [Sunday, October 26th] Prince George was proclaimed King

first before Savile House, then at Charing Cross, Temple Bar, Cheapside, and the Royal Exchange.

The proclamation was carried through with ‘the usual solemnities’; and was attended by ‘the Principal Officers of State, a great Number of the Nobility and of Other Persons of Distinction.’ The people of the capital were discreetly jubilant. At last the country had a true-born Englishman for King, and not a coarse German, who scorned England and Englishmen and bragged about his miserable little electorate. George III looked an Englishman: he was upstanding as a man ought to be, and his open countenance and florid complexion were typical of the English squirearchy.

Monday came and with it another shock for Newcastle and his friends. The King made his brother Edward, Duke of York, and John, Earl of Bute, Privy Councillors: it was clear to all that the latter would share in his master’s good fortune. But Whiggery’s fears were calmed when it was found that the King did not intend to make any startling ministerial innovations; and Mr Pitt earnestly hoped that he would be allowed to continue the war in his own way. They were somewhat disconcerted at the inaccessibility of the King: he seemed to remain as much as possible with his mother, and they mistrusted her influence.

October 1760 worked itself slowly out in a welter of business. Details of mourning for the army and navy had to be settled; foreign courts had to be informed of the change of sovereign; deputations had to be received and their address of loyalty answered. Everyone was charmed with the sober bearing of the new King. The reign was only a week old when Lord Lyttleton informed Lady Mary Wortley Montague:

It is with great pleasure I assure you that all parties unite in the strongest expression of zeal and affection for our young King and approbation of his behaviour since his accession. He has shown the most obliging kindness to *all* the Royal Family, and done everything that was necessary to give his government quiet and unanimity in this difficult crisis.

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Nor was Horace Walpole less generous in his praise. He wrote :

The young King has all the appearance of being amiable. There is great grace and temper, much dignity and good nature, which breaks out on all occasions.

That was a first impression ; the second was even more flattering. In another letter to his friend, Sir Horace Mann, Horace Walpole said :

I saw him [the King] yesterday, and was surprised to find the levee room had lost so entirely the air of the lion's den. The sovereign does not stand in one spot with his eyes fixed royally on the ground, and dropping bits of German news. He walks about and speaks freely to everybody. I saw him afterwards on the throne, where he is graceful and genteel, sits with dignity and reads his answers to addresses well.

Quite a sensation was caused by the 'Proclamation for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for the preventing and punishing Vice, Profaneness and Immorality,' issued on November 1st and almost certainly inspired by his mother, who was always so greatly alarmed by the viciousness of the youth of the day. And poor Dr Wilson, who preached before the King at St James's on the first Sunday of the reign [November 2nd] and had punctuated his remarks with some kind words about the royal virtues, was greatly dismayed when he was informed that His Majesty attended Divine Service to hear the praises of God, not his own !

George's treatment of the other members of the Royal Family left a very favourable impression upon the minds of his subjects. He sent 'the civilest letter' to his aunt, the Princess Amelia, and showed the 'greatest kindness to the Duke.' In an interview with the latter he remarked upon the fatal discord which had torn their family, and said that it was his intention 'to inaugurate a new regime.' Cumberland liked the young man's frankness, and was ready to give him whatever assistance he required.

* * *

THE FUNERAL OF the dead King took place on November 11th. As Horace Walpole remarked, George III showed 'the utmost respect to the dead body.' He carried out his grandfather's

wishes. Lady Yarmouth was paid off with more than £8000 in bank-notes—the King himself adding 2000 guineas to the £6000 found in the late King's escritoire in an envelope with her name on it. The practice of tearing up royal wills was no longer followed: George III saw that his grandfather's will was scrupulously executed. Parsimonious though the late King had been he left only about £30,000 which was to be shared between his three surviving children. Cumberland, the soul of generosity, forewent his share, which was divided between his two sisters.

The late King had expressed a wish that he should be buried at the side of his Queen, with the sides of the two coffins removed so that their dust might mingle together. His grandson saw to it that that wish was most faithfully respected when on Tuesday, November 11th at seven o'clock in the evening he was laid to rest in the Chapel of Henry VII at Westminster. Horace Walpole's description of the burial, and his somewhat irreverent though pungently witty remarks on the behaviour of some of the mourners, is a delightful piece of sarcasm.

The Prince's chamber, hung with purple and a quantity of silver lamps, the coffin under a canopy of purple velvet, and six chandeliers of silver on high stands—had a very good effect. The ambassador from Tripoli and his son were carried to see that chamber. The procession through a line of foot guards, every seventh man bearing a torch—the horse guards lining the outside, their officers with drawn sabres and crape sashes, on horseback—the drums muffled—the fifes, bells tolling and minute guns—all this was very solemn. . . . The real serious part was the figure of the Duke of Cumberland, heightened by a thousand melancholy circumstances. He had a dark brown adonis, and a cloak of black cloth with a train of five yards. Attending the funeral of a father could not be pleasant; his leg extremely bad, yet forced to stand upon it near two hours; his face bloated and distorted with his late paralytic stroke, which has affected, too, one of his eyes; and placed over the mouth of the vault, into which in all probability he must himself so soon descend: think how unpleasant a situation! He bore it all with a firm and unaffected countenance. This grave scene was fully contrasted by the burlesque Duke of Newcastle. He fell into a fit of crying the moment he came into the chapel, and flung himself back in a stall, the Archbishop hovering over him with a snelling-bottle; but in two minutes his curiosity got the better of his hypocrisy, and he ran about the chapel with his glass to spy who was or was not

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there, spying with one hand and mopping his eyes with the other. Then returned the fear of catching cold ; and the Duke of Cumberland, who was sinking with heat, felt himself weighed down, and turning round, found it was the Duke of Newcastle standing upon his train to avoid the chill of the marble. It was very theatric to look down into the vault, where the coffin lay attended by mourners with lights.

* * *

ON NOVEMBER 18TH George III met his first Parliament. His Whig Ministers sat uneasily in their seats. The Speech from the Throne, originally drafted by Hardwicke and transmitted to the King by Newcastle, had been tampered with. In his own handwriting the King had set down the following interpolation :

Born and educated in this country I glory in the name of Britain ; and the peculiar happiness of my people will ever consist in promoting the welfare of a people, whose loyalty and warm affection to me I consider the greatest and most permanent security to my throne.

Newcastle recognized in an instant Bute's hand in those words. To Hardwicke he said, 'it denotes the author to all the world.' He toyed with the idea of having them challenged in debate, but in the end he allowed them to pass, and felt very uncomfortable about it all. It was obvious that the new King was shaking off the fetters of constitutional practice as defined by the Whigs : in the days of his grandfather and great-grandfather there had been no attempt to tamper with the contents of the Speeches from the Throne as prepared by the Administration. The great Whig political 'bosses' had cracked their whips like circus masters, and the King had popped on to his little tub, said his piece in atrocious English, and then withdrawn from the arena.

But the business of Parliament proceeded smoothly enough. The references to 'Mr Pitt's War' were in the best Pitt tradition : it would be prosecuted relentlessly until 'a safe and honourable peace' could be obtained, and the murmurs of those backbenchers who were already beginning to think that the time had long since come for peacemaking were smothered by the rounds of applause which greeted the young King's début as a politician. General satisfaction, however, was displayed at the manner in which the King had voluntarily consented to allow parliament

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"OMINOUS WORDS"

By courtesy of the British Museum

to exercise a direct control over his personal expenses : he surrendered to the nation his life interest in the hereditary revenues of the Crown, and all claims to any surplus which might accrue from them, in return for a fixed civil list of £800,000 a year ‘for the support of his household and the honour and dignity of his crown.’ And he further revealed his wisdom in breaking with post-Revolution practice of requiring the judges to resign their offices on the death of the sovereign, so that his successor might reappoint them. This excellent reform was accordingly confirmed by statute, and so delighted were the judges that they took the first opportunity to wait upon the King, ‘in their robes,’ to thank him for his graciousness. Parliament was dissolved on March 19th, 1761, and writs were issued for a new election, which, the King hoped, would be carried through without recourse to bribery.

* * *

NO KING HAD a higher conception of his duty than George III. It was his plain duty to marry and procreate children. Where was his bride to come from? His mother was convinced that only Germany could produce a personable *consort* for so young and inexperienced a King. German princesses were so carefully brought up in the stern morality of Lutheranism ; and they invariably did what their husbands—and their mothers-in-law—wanted them to do. But George had a different idea in his mind. Why should he not have an English queen? And why should not that queen be Lady Sarah Lennox, the youngest daughter of Charles, Duke of Richmond? Not only was she a very charming young person, but she was a descendant of Charles II ; and George was much attracted by her.

The young King was a bashful lover. While he often met and talked with the Lady Sarah, he could never summon up the courage to ask her to be his wife, though more than once he inflicted his halting proposals upon third parties. Wily Henry Fox, her brother-in-law, did all he could to bring about a match : his eye was always keen to recognize opportunities for social and political advancement. So the young King was invited to Holland House to see the Lady Sarah play *Jane Shore* in Nicholas Rowe’s play of that name, and probably shared Horace Walpole’s enthusiasm for her entrancing loveliness—‘no Magdalen by

GEORGE THE THIRD

Correggio was half so lovely and expressive.' She was invited to the royal birthday celebrations, which according to Horace Walpole 'exceeded the splendour of Haroun Alraschid and the "Arabian Nights", on June 4th, 1761.

At one of the Drawing Rooms the King took Lady Susan Strangways aside. She was the Lady Sarah's dearest friend, and he doubtless knew that whatever he said would be passed on to his lady-love.

'His Majesty . . . asked her in a whisper if she did not think the Coronation [would be] a much fairer sight if there was a queen. She said "Yes." He then asked her if she did not know somebody who would grace that ceremony in the properst manner. At this she was much embarrassed, thinking he meant herself; but he went on and said, "I mean your friend, Lady Sarah Lennox. Tell her so, and let me have her answer the next Drawing Room day."

On a later occasion he had another conversation with Lady Susan Strangways.

They talk of a wedding. There have been many proposals, but I think an English match would be better than a foreign one. Pray tell Lady Sarah I say so.

No one will probably ever know why the Lady Sarah Lennox was so reluctant to yield to the King's overtures. Some said that she had lost her heart to the young Lord Newbattle, who later became the Marquis of Lothian; but when she did marry her choice fell on Sir Charles Bunbury, a sporting baronet whose patronage of Turf and Ring made him the Lord Lonsdale of his times; and her second husband was the Honourable George Napier, by whom she had two famous sons—Sir William, the historian of the Peninsula War, and Sir Charles, the Conqueror of Scinde.

The Lady Sarah's delay in giving the King an answer proved fatal. When the Dowager-Princess learnt that the young couple were seen frequently in each other's company she took alarm: such a marriage must never take place. Bute was probably won over to her way of thinking; and it is easy to picture the two of them 'lecturing' the young King on the inadvisability of marrying a subject's daughter, and on his duty to find a wife among the princesses of Germany. The combination was too

strong for him: the arguments, too convincingly subtle. It was his duty to forget the Lady Sarah.

Colonel David Graeme, one of Bute's friends, was sent out to Germany to report on the princesses available for marriage. His instructions were explicit: only good Lutherans would be considered; and they must be accomplished in music and the usual genteel arts, amiable and good-looking. At Pyrmont Graeme came upon the Dowager-Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who had gone there to take the waters with her two daughters; and the younger daughter, Charlotte Sophia, seemed to the Colonel to fulfil all the conditions laid down by his employers. He reported accordingly; and in due course a preliminary offer of marriage was made.

Naturally there was a tremendous amount of excitement in the ducal palace at Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and it was greatly increased when the official English envoy appeared with the formal proposal of marriage and orders to bring the little princess to her future home in England. Lord Harcourt was the envoy: he was accompanied by the Duchesses of Ancaster and Hamilton, two very charming ladies, who immediately won the heart of their future queen. Charlotte was somewhat put about by the ceremonial of the formal betrothal—when she was laid upon a sofa and the English King's proxy placed his leg by her; but her brother, the Duke, gruffly chided her with *Allons, ne fais pas l'enfant, tu vas être reine d'Angleterre*; and her confidence returned.

Harcourt and the Duchesses escorted her to the English ships which under the command of Lord Anson were lying at the mouth of the Elbe. The countryside came out to see the future Queen of England; but most people were a little disappointed at the plainness of her looks. Everything was done for her comfort: the ships were daubed with a profusion of gilt; and the cabin and saloons were furnished with mahogany furniture, Turkey carpets and red damask hangings. And as a compliment to her musical ability they had placed a new harpsichord in her saloon.

For a fortnight Anson and his men tried to bring the ships to an English port. Storms beat them back, or drove them even as far north as Norway. The two English Duchesses and the three German personal servants [Mistress von Schwellenberg, Mistress Hagedorn and Herr Friedrich Albert] suffered terribly

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from sea-sickness; and were much too unconcerned about the world around them to appreciate Charlotte's kindness in leaving the door of her saloon open so that they might hear her playing on the harpsichord! Charlotte herself was quite unaffected by the stormy crossing: she ate well, and played continuously.

Anson had been commanded to land the Princess at Greenwich, but after a fortnight at sea and fearing the risk of interference from French men-o'-war he decided to put into the first English port he could. So Charlotte landed unexpectedly at Harwich on September 7th, 1761. There was no splendid reception such as there would have been at Greenwich, only a few townsmen who rushed to the water's edge to see who came in the ships which battled their way into port. The Princess was then taken to Witham in Essex, the home of the Earl of Abercorn, where she stayed the night; and early next morning she was driven towards the capital.

The Londoners gave her a Londoners' reception. The crowds in the streets craned their necks to see the little seventeen years old Princess who had come to be a wife of their popular young King. They shouted themselves hoarse with delight as her carriage passed by. It pleased them to see her dressed in 'English style':

a fly cap with rich lace lappets, a stomacher ornamented with diamonds, and a gold brocade suit with a white ground.

At a quarter to three in the afternoon the procession reached St James's Palace. Charlotte turned pale when she saw the building which was to be one of her homes; and when her confusion caused the Duchess of Hamilton to smile she said:

My dear Duchess, you may laugh, you have been married twice but it is no joke to me.

Edward, Duke of York, assisted her to alight from the carriage, and on his arm led her into the garden, where the King awaited her. She would have knelt to George, but he took her in his arms, and embraced her. Then he took her over to his mother, and afterwards introduced her to the other members of the royal family.

The King's countenance had fallen momentarily at first seeing Charlotte. Her plainness must have stood out in marked contrast to the beauty of the Lady Sarah.

JACK-BOOT AND PETTICOAT

She is not tall, nor a beauty, pale and very thin, but looks sensible and is very genteel. Her hair is darkish and fine; her forehead low, and her nose very well, except the nostrils spreading too wide; her mouth has the same fault, but her teeth are good.

Such is Horace Walpole's description of Charlotte.

The ordeal through which the young girl was made to pass that day was a terrible one. At nine at night she was married to George by Dr Secker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Chapel Royal. The King's brothers, the Duke of York and Prince William Henry, attended her: the Duke of Cumberland gave her away. Her gown weighed her down:

. . . white and silver; an endless mantle of violet-coloured velvet, lined with ermine, and attempted to be fastened on her shoulder by a bunch of large pearls, dragged itself and almost the rest of her clothes half-way down her waist. On her head was a beautiful little tiara of diamonds, a diamond necklace and a stomacher of diamonds, worth three score thousand pounds.

The jewels were her husband's gift: like Edward III he was throughout his long life extremely fond of jewelry.

The household arrangements broke down; and when the party returned from the Chapel there was no supper ready for them and their friends. Charlotte saved the situation by playing the harpsichord and singing, which delighted the distinguished audience and made them less conscious of their empty stomachs. Supper over, the King and his bride moved freely among the guests; and poor old Cumberland thought that they would never go to bed. At last he bluntly told his nephew that he was tired and was going home. It was a signal for the break-up of the party. It was announced that there would be no visit to the royal bedroom to see the couple in bed, which was the real attraction of a royal wedding: the custom was never revived after George III's reign.

* * *

GEORGE AND CHARLOTTE were crowned King and Queen on September 22nd, 1761. The weather was King's weather: thousands slept out to be ready for the spectacle: the streets were thronged with loyal citizens. Horace Walpole, who professed to be rather bored by such occasions, was amazed at

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the high prices paid for seats and stands: his mother had paid 40 guineas for the use of two rooms and a scaffold to witness the coronation of George II and Caroline of Ansbach; but similar accommodation in 1761 cost 350 guineas.

George and Charlotte bore the long religious ceremony bravely and humbly. As a matter of fact poor Charlotte was in agony from neuralgia and toothache all through the service. When the time came for them to receive the Sacrament the King whispered to the Archbishop to know if he ought to remove his crown. Secker, unable to answer the question, asked Dr Zachariah Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, if he knew what the practice was. The King decided the matter for himself: he removed his crown, saying that 'humility best became such a solemn act of devotion.' Old Lady Montague was delighted:

How happy in the day of greatest worldly pomp he should remember his duty to the King of kings!

And many shared her feelings.

The subsequent part of the ceremony, however, was very badly bungled. All went well as the King and Queen passed into Westminster Hall. Ministers of the Crown, Ambassadors from foreign courts, Knights of the Garter and of the Bath, great Lords and their Ladies, members of the Lords and Commons, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, the Barons of the Cinque Ports, all in resplendent robes were gathered there to do honour to their Sovereigns. But when the time came for the company to sit down for the customary feast the imperfections in the arrangements were at once revealed. No chairs of state were provided for the King and Queen: no covers were laid for the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, and the Barons of the Cinque Ports. Their dignity was touched, and they did not hesitate to remind the Lord Steward, William Lord Talbot, that they took the omissions very badly. But the Lord Steward had worries of his own. Knowing that he would have to appear in the Hall mounted on his horse he had taught the beast to back out of the royal presence so efficiently that it stolidly refused to go forward and brought its master into the Hall backwards! This caused a great deal of amusement among the company. Dymock, the Royal Champion, mounted on the white charger which George II had ridden at Dettingen, played his part well. He

hurled his challenges forth into the four quarters of the Hall, and they remained unanswered.

Soon after the ceremony the tale went round that in the gallery of Westminster Hall on Coronation Day sat none other than Charles Edward Stuart, the 'Young Pretender.' An old Jacobite friend pierced his disguise, and whispered in his ear that he was 'the last of all mortals' whom he would have expected to find there. Prince Charlie then told him that 'it was curiosity that led' him into Westminster Hall. Rather wistfully he added :

But I assure you that the person, who is the object of all this pomp and magnificence is the person I envy the least.

Hard to believe though the story is it is not by any means improbable; for the Prince had visited London in far more dangerous times in 1750. In the intervening eleven years misfortune had undermined his character: he was an addict to 'the nasty bottle' and had become a disreputable rake. What little popularity and loyalty remained to him were now being taken from him by a young man, who 'gloried' in the fact that he was an Englishman and coquetted gallantly with the Tories, whose Jacobitism had more often than not been inspired by hatred of Whiggery and its ways.

For a month after the Coronation the Court indulged in a round of pleasure. There were musical evenings at the Palace; and very formal and select balls. Once a week the King took the Queen to the Play and the Opera: the latter gave her genuine pleasure, because she was so fond of music. Curiously enough her first visit to opera in England was to see and hear Gay's *The Beggars' Opera*, which in George II's reign had been considered a rather treasonable production but now quickly became the rage of the Town. There is little doubt that Charlotte was supremely happy during the first few weeks of her sojourn in England: everything was so new to her, and so exhilarating.

George was essentially a family man: he found no place more attractive than his own home. His mother looked askance at the 'goings-on' of the Court: they were, she believed, such bad examples for the nation—the nation which she was convinced was rotten with every form of viciousness. It was George's duty as a husband to keep Charlotte away from such dangerous influences. George wanted to be a good husband; and so

instead of the innocent pleasures which had followed their Coronation he introduced the habit of the ‘evening at home,’ when he read either to himself or to Charlotte and she did embroidery or played and sang to him. Simplicity of life did not interfere with their happiness in the least; but it deprived Charlotte of the one thing of which she stood most in need of —a knowledge of the world and of the people who were her husband’s subjects. No one could come into her presence without first explaining his or her business to Mistress von Schwellenberg; and the members of the English nobility were far too proud and independent to wait upon the favours of a coarse German maid-of-honour. The absence of hospitality at Court was in marked contrast to the generous hospitality which was freely offered in the homes of the people of England.

From the first the Dowager-Princess treated the Queen as a child. George himself knew that such would be the case, for some years later his brother, William, Duke of Gloucester, said:

He [the King] had told me that he had given her [the Queen] a caution never to be alone with my mother, for she was an artful woman and would try to govern her.

But his mother was too strong for him; and though he himself may have wanted to shield his young wife from her interference his loyalty as a son prevented him ever from doing so. The Dowager-Princess was determined to make the Queen realize that a mother-in-law’s power was as great as a husband’s. Soon after the Coronation it was arranged that the King and Queen should take the Sacrament together in St Paul’s. Charlotte had promised her mother that she would always approach the Altar unadorned with jewelry. The Dowager-Princess heard of this, and she at once resolved that the Queen must wear her jewels. To George she advanced all sorts of arguments as to why the Queen’s promise to her dead mother ought not to be respected. He pleaded for his wife, but in the end it was he who commanded Charlotte to put on her jewels, and not even her tears could make him realize that he should have thwarted his mother’s pettiness and spite.

Charlotte had been well brought up: they had told her that her husband would always know best, and it was therefore not for her to question his decisions. Not for nothing had they

gone to the ducal backwaters of Neu-Strelitz to find a consort for the young King: a princess better acquainted with the ways of the world and of greater independence of spirit would have quickly put the Dowager-Princess in her place.

* * *

GEORGE'S ATTACK UPON the Whigs has usually been regarded as conclusive evidence of his incompetence and subservience to Bute. This view, the stock-in-trade of text-book writers, may be accurate; but it ignores the fact that when George came to the throne Whiggery was fast losing its grip on public affairs. The great Whig families were the buttresses of the Hanoverian Succession: the solidarity of their rule had done much for Great Britain, and spared her people the agonies of a bitter dynastic feud. But the Whigs had used their power not only to enrich themselves and their friends, but also to vent their wrath upon their Tory opponents, and thereby had made inevitable a day of reckoning.

When the author of *Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man on the New Reign and New Parliament* asked if George was 'to content himself with the shadow of royalty while a set of undertakers for his business intercept his immediate communication with his people and make use of the legal prerogatives of their master to establish the illegal claims of factious oligarchy' he was merely echoing the sentiments of the majority of George's Tory subjects. They thought that the Whigs had 'the sovereign in leading strings': they hoped that George would quickly put an end to such a discreditable system of government. And there was every indication that he would, for he had been in constant association with Bute, whose Tory sympathies were well known.

Thus the Tories constituted themselves into a Peace Party, and clamoured for bringing the 'German War' to a speedy end. They disliked the war because it was a Whig war. They feared that its continuance under the masterly direction of Pitt might restore the waning fortunes of their political opponents. The financial burdens created by the war fell most heavily upon the Tory landowners, who secured none of the advantages which accrued to Whig mercantile interests; and Pitt's profligacy in subsidizing the Prussian Frederick was in Tory eyes a political impiety.

Shortly after the dissolution of Parliament in March 1761 there was a re-shuffle of the Ministerial offices. Mr Henry Bilson Legge, whose reputation as a wit was infinitely greater than his ability as a politician, was dismissed from his post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. William, Viscount Barrington, Secretary for War, was thereupon transferred to the Exchequer, and Charles Townshend took Barrington's place at the War Office. These changes were followed by another which shook the Whig Ministry to its very foundations: Holderness, one of the two Secretaries of State, was induced to resign, and Bute was brought into the Cabinet.

For this the Whigs had only themselves to thank. George had admittedly made the appointment, but it was done on Newcastle's advice, and was endorsed by other members of the Government. The truth of the matter is that there were jealousies and divisions within the Whig Party. The Duke of Bedford was disaffected because the command of the British forces in Germany had not been given to one of his friends: Newcastle not only disliked Pitt but was actively working to oust him out of the Government: Henry Fox hoped to secure Newcastle's place. Nor was there agreement on the subject of the 'German War.' Bedford, Hardwicke, George Grenville and Fox were in favour of peace: Pitt, Temple and James Grenville wanted the war to continue. The general public, blissfully ignorant of these dissensions and infatuated by Pitt's oratory, remained staunchly war-minded.

Early in October Pitt resigned: Temple, his brother-in-law, also threw in his hand. The country was flabbergasted. There was much wild talk about instituting a 'general mourning' for such a national calamity. London even thought the King should be asked to give an explanation of the 'dismissal.' The mob shouted wildly about 'Scotch Minister' and Petticoat Government; believing that their idol had been deliberately removed from his pedestal by the influence of Bute and the Dowager-Princess. And on all sides blame was laid upon the King for dispensing with the services of the man whose genius as an 'organizer of victory' had made his country's name feared throughout the world.

Mob verdicts are seldom accurate. While George may have desired Pitt's removal from the Cabinet it could not have effected

it without the active co-operation and support of those members of the Government who were bound to Pitt by the strongest political ties. Suspecting a secret understanding between Spain and France, and wisely wishing to strike before the Spaniards were prepared, Pitt had urged his colleagues in the Government to declare war on Spain. He was given every facility to argue his case, but it was rejected in council, and he was consequently left with no alternative but to resign. At any moment Newcastle could have saved him: he controlled the vote in Parliament, and a word in the King's ear that Pitt's dismissal would result in the resignation of the Cabinet would have stayed for the time being at least the King's hand. But there is no evidence that Newcastle so much as wanted to save Pitt: on the contrary he was probably pleased to see his old colleague forced so easily into the wilderness.

The popular excitement died down somewhat when it was announced that Pitt had accepted a peerage for his wife and a pension of £3000 a year for three lives. For the moment the idol had feet of clay. Pitt had put himself in the royal pocket: he had sacrificed his noble principles for a title and money. Then someone had a brilliant idea: Pitt was more to be pitied than blamed, for the peerage and pension were cunningly bestowed upon the fallen minister merely to discredit him in the eyes of the public! There was only one man in England capable of such a low-down trick: that man was Bute.

Pitt's friends lost no opportunity to inflame the mob against the King and Bute. When the former passed along the streets to visit his mother he was regularly asked if he was 'going to suck.' Insults were hurled at him in the theatre and the opera, and he could not stop his ears to the filthy insinuations about his mother and Bute. Crowds surged round his palaces, carrying with them a jack-boot and petticoat;¹ and it was no longer necessary to tell the King what those emblems meant. Bute had to hire a gang of bruisers to escort him through the streets; and even they did not always save him from the fury of the mob.

The proceedings on Lord Mayor's Day, 1761, revealed the extent of George's unpopularity in his capital. With Charlotte he drove to the house of a Quaker, 'friend Barclay,' to watch the pageantry of the Lord Mayor's Show. The crowds cheered

¹ The Jack-Boot was a play on Bute's name—John, Earl of Bute. Bute then appears to have been pronounced *boot*.

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as they went by, but with nothing like the enthusiasm which they put into their welcome of Pitt and Temple; and when later in the Guildhall the King rose to propose the health of the City of London he was most coldly received. Yet, when Pitt had entered the banqueting hall, Lord Mayor and Aldermen had risen to their feet and cheered until the rafters rang.

Bute had a singularly unfortunate experience that day. As his coach made its way down Ludgate Hill it was mistaken by the crowd for Pitt's; and a tremendous cheer went up. Outside St Paul's the mistake was discovered.

By God, this is not Pitt. This is Bute and be damned to him.

The crowd closed in on the coach. Bute's bruisers were quite unable to cope with the situation. An attempt was made to cut the traces of the horses. Windows were broken; and terrible curses were hurled at the unfortunate man. Happily some constables arrived in time to rescue him and Barrington, who was with him in the coach, or the mob would have probably lynched him. All day they waited for him to return to his home; but Hardwicke gave him a lift in his coach, and the mob had to go home disappointed.

The popular fury was intensified when at the end of the year it became evident that a war with Spain could not be avoided. Pitt's fears were realised: his removal from the Government was therefore the more unjustifiable. On January 2nd, 1762, George was reluctantly compelled to agree that peace between the two countries was no longer possible: two days later a formal declaration of war was made.

Pitt's place in the Government had fallen to Charles Wyndham, Earl of Egremont: Temple's, to the Duke of Bedford. But the actual driving force in the Cabinet now was Bute, and it was quite logical that he should seek to assume the leadership. This necessitated the removal of Newcastle; but he was by no means an easy man to remove. Hints that his presence in the Government was no longer desired were lost upon him; and even studied insults were cheerfully borne. The decision to discontinue the subsidies to Frederick the Great touched his honour: Great Britain was pledged to pay Frederick until the war was ended. He remonstrated with the King: as his principal adviser he pressed that the pledge should be honoured. But

George and the other members of the Cabinet were convinced that the time had come to stem the flow of British gold to Prussia; and Newcastle's advice fell upon deaf ears. On May 14th he told George that he thought the time had come for him to retire into private life. The King replied, as it is said, somewhat coldly:

Then, my Lord, I must fill your place as best I can.

But it was not until May 26th that the resignation was in the King's hands! Political power was Newcastle's dearest friend: he not unnaturally found the parting a hard one.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Newcastle was one of the most remarkable men of his age. An expert political 'boss' he had kept Whiggery in power during the twenty years which followed Sir Robert Walpole's fall. He had squandered tens of thousands of public money in bribery and corruption; and could boast that not only had he made the fortunes of five hundred men but that there was not a Bishop in the land who did not owe his elevation to the episcopacy or translation to another see to his influence. Yet steeped though he had been in corruption he had never used his position to enrich himself; and when he went into retirement his private income, which had once been £25,000 a year, had shrunk to less than £6000 a year. George was aware of the sacrifices which Newcastle had made in the interests of the House of Hanover, and when the Duke came to take his leave of him he generously offered him a pension, remarking that in doing so he was only discharging a debt due from the Crown. Newcastle refused the offer: he told the King that if his fortunes had suffered by his loyalty to the House of Hanover and his service to his country then he was already richly rewarded, and that if he could not serve his country he would never become a burden on her.

Newcastle's resignation necessitated another re-shuffle of the Cabinet. Bute took the Duke's place as First Lord of the Treasury; George Grenville, Bute's as one of the Secretaries of State; while Sir Francis Dashwood became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Dashwood's appointment at once raises the question as to how much say the King had in the making of it. Dashwood's connection with the *Dilettanti Society* and the *Hell-Fire Club* or *Society of the Monks of Medmenham*—

infamous societies in which the most disgusting drunken orgies took place—must have made him detestable in the eyes of a man with George's strict moral code; and had the King the influence over the formation of cabinets, which Whig historians assert that he had, then it is surprising that he ever consented to Dashwood's appointment. He might have been expected to resist it with the same stubbornness as he resisted the younger Pitt's effort to give relief to the Catholics of Ireland later in his reign. And what of the Dowager-Princess, who was always so concerned about people's morals? Surely, had she been able to do so she would have persuaded George and Bute that Dashwood was not a fit and proper person for inclusion in any government. The only possible explanation of Dashwood's appointment is that in 1762 neither George nor Bute wielded the power which is generally imputed to them: Whiggery was still strong enough to make its demands, and the King must concede them.

As the year wore on the hope of peace grew stronger. Early in November Bedford in Paris had hammered out the basis of a settlement with representatives of the French Government: the settlement was extremely favourable to Great Britain, but the difficulty which confronted Bute and his colleagues was how to get Parliament to accept the terms. Henry Fox bluntly told the King and Bute that the surest way to success lay in bribery: he also reminded them that there was no man in the Cabinet better fitted than himself for such work. George very definitely, and probably Bute, at first shrank from using Fox's suggestion, but the danger of the defeat of Government on the peace terms compelled them to think seriously about Fox's scheme, and in the end they accepted it. Said the King to George Grenville:

We must call in bad men to govern bad men.

The remark may have smoothed Grenville's ruffled temper; for once the decision to embark upon a course of wholesale bribery was made it became imperative that Fox should assume the Leadership of the House of Commons, a position which George Grenville was very reluctant to give up. Bute's promise that once the peace terms were ratified he would resign and that he would recommend the King to give his place to Grenville put the latter in the humour to consent to anything! So Grenville went to the Admiralty; Halifax took his place as

Secretary of State; and Fox remained in his office of Paymaster, though in the House of Commons he would lead for the Government.

Fox put his heart and soul into the task of ‘providing’ the Government with safe majorities in the Lords and Commons. Bribes were lavished right and left, either in the form of titles or cash payments; and where these failed to produce complacent voters among those who were opposed to the peace the most shameful methods of intimidation and revenge were resorted to. The Duke of Devonshire, whose paramount position among the ‘Great Families of Whiggery’ made him a force to be reckoned with, was expelled from the Privy Council, George with his own hand striking the Duke’s name out of the Minute Book. Devonshire’s brother-in-law, the Earl of Besborough, thereupon resigned from the office of Postmaster, as was hoped would happen. The Dukes of Grafton and Newcastle and the Marquis of Rockingham were politely informed that their services as Lords-Lieutenant were no longer required in their respective counties. Worthy men were driven from office; and pensions and favours procured through the influence of the Government’s opponents at any time were revoked. With Fox’s help the King was playing the Whigs at their own game: they, forgetful of the fact that when they had the power they had done precisely the same discreditable things, did not like it, and tried to present George to his people as a high-handed despot, who was resolved to make a sinister attack upon their cherished liberties.

Parliament assembled in December: the popular excitement was intense. Great crowds thronged the approaches to Westminster to hurl abuse at the Government supporters and to cheer Pitt and his war-mongering friends. In the House of Lords it fell to Bute, in the House of Commons to Fox, to defend the Government’s policy. Bute played his part magnificently: even his opponents were compelled to admit that he had never spoken better. Afflicted by one of his terrible spasms of gout, Pitt, swathed in bandages, dragged himself to his place in the House of Commons; and for three and a half hours he poured forth a torrent of criticism upon the Government. In his opinion—and he was at pains to remind his hearers that with his intimate knowledge of the conduct of the war his opinion counted for something—neither France nor Spain had been properly humili-

ated: Phoenix-like they would arise out of their ashes again to challenge Great Britain's position in the world. And was Frederick of Prussia, a most faithful ally, to be deserted so shamefully by the people whose battles he had so nobly fought? During the war the British peoples had been called upon to make many and great sacrifices: the terms which the Government had secured were a miserable recompense for the sacrifices endured and the glorious victories gained on land and sea. Pain drove Pitt to his seat before he could treat the House to one of his impassioned perorations.

Calmly Fox rose in his place to answer the criticisms of the 'Great Commoner.' He was Pitt's superior as a debater, though not as an orator; and with cold, unimpassioned logic he drew out his defence of the Government's policy. Great Britain had secured peace with honour: France and Spain had consented to concessions greater than had ever before been secured from any foe. Pitt did not wait to hear the whole of Fox's speech. Dramatic though his departure was—he hobbled, supported by friends, painfully across the floor of the House—it was a tactical blunder; for he left his supporters leaderless at a time when leadership was most desperately needed by them. So the Government triumphed, the voting being 319 to 65.

The King had realized one of his cherished ambitions—to give his people peace. But at what a terrible price! The manipulated parliamentary majorities did not represent the popular will: the knowledge that they had been obtained by the most shameless bribery and intimidation gave colour to the rumour that the King was bent upon establishing a despotism. Mobs, incited to all sorts of violence by agitators many of whom were unquestionably in the pay of the defeated politicians, threatened life and property within the capital; and the outcry against the Dowager-Princess and Bute, who were held to be responsible for the King's actions, grew louder and louder, the abuse filthier and filthier. A tax on cider, which found a place in Dashwood's Budget, carried the Government's unpopularity into the rural districts; and at length Bute was made to realize that his continuance in office could only bring disaster upon the Crown. On April 8th, 1763, therefore, he tendered his resignation to the King. Barrington writing to a friend a few days later said:

Lord Bute resigned last Friday. He will have no office, and declares that he will not be a Minister behind the curtain, but give up business entirely. The reasons he gives for this step are that he finds the dislike taken to him has lessened the popularity which the King had and ought to have; that he hopes his retirement will make things quiet and His Majesty's Government easy. He says that he unwillingly undertook the business of a Minister, on the King's absolute promise that he might retire when the peace should be made.

George never knew a more faithful servant and loyal friend than Bute; and he received from him the greatest service and friendship when he resigned in April, 1763. To the end Bute was solicitous about the political welfare of the King; and shortly before he sent in his resignation he pleaded earnestly with the Duke of Bedford loyally to stand by the Throne. Bute's letter to Bedford is worth quotation :

Need I make use of many arguments to prevail on the Duke of Bedford to assist his young Sovereign with his weight and name—that Sovereign who has not a wish but what terminates in this country's happiness, and who, since he mounted the throne, has shown ever the highest regard and predilection for the Duke of Bedford.

Poor Bute was not then to know that his parting gift would add to the King's burdens.

* * *

IN THE QUIET of his home, however, George could now and then escape from the heat and dust of the political battle which raged so madly about him. He was ideally happy with Charlotte. In the evenings he would often read to her—edifying books: she would play and sing to him, and—so malicious tongues would have it—sometimes knitted him underclothes. George does not ever appear to have burdened Charlotte with his ‘business worries.’

During the more arduous months of Charlotte's pregnancy he took her to live at Richmond. It was very peaceful and countrified there, and George himself found infinite joy in roaming about the neighbouring countryside, chatting freely to farmers and labourers, and winning that reputation which he

always enjoyed of being the most accessible of princes. But early in the summer of 1762 a terrible fear took hold of the royal household: the King had fallen a victim of the influenza epidemic which was at the time ravaging London. Charlotte found him a most trying patient. He refused to be bled when the doctors said that only by bleeding would the fever be lessened; and he persisted in telling those about him that there was nothing really the matter with him. At last Charlotte had her way, and the doctors bled him; but he was up and about his business long before he ought to have been; and it has been held that his rashness on this occasion was responsible for planting the seeds of that mysterious malady which finally robbed him of his reason.

Convention demanded that the baby should be born in London; and at the end of July the royal household went into residence at St James's Palace. Charlotte had taken a dislike to this royal residence from the moment that she saw it. It was cold and forbidding—more like a prison than a home; and it was to please her that George had about this time opened negotiations for the purchase of Buckingham House, which is described as ‘a pleasant red-brick building facing St James's Park and standing in its own grounds.’ But it could not be ready in time for the accouchement, and as a result the future George IV was born in St James's Palace on August 12th, 1762.

forgotten for the moment were the bitter political hatreds created by the King's determination to end the ‘German War.’ The Londoners went mad with delight, when they heard the City's bells pealing the news over the capital that there was an heir to England's throne; and the popular excitement was emphasized by the appearance in the streets of great carts taking the half-a-million of bullion found in the hold of the captured *Hermione* to the vaults of the Bank of England. It was an omen: the baby would always have a golden spoon in his mouth.

When the baby was a fortnight old he was baptized in a private room of the Palace by Dr Secker, the Archbishop, who had the distinction of having baptized and married the proud father. The god-parents were the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Mecklenberg-Strelitz and the Dowager-Princess of Wales. A day or so later the Queen's bed was carried into the

Drawing Room, where she received a very select company of the great lords and ladies of the land, who were permitted to see the sturdy little boy lying in his cradle, which was protected by ‘a Chinese Fence’ so that no one should touch him. Charlotte was very proud of her baby: she had him modelled in wax, and this rather curious ‘work of art’—for so it was described—reposed for many years in a glass case on her dressing-table.

The baby’s arrival had the effect of sweeping away the gloom of drab respectability which had descended so suddenly upon the Court; and for a short time the King and Queen tried to assume the leadership of Society. But their tastes were so inexpensive, their guests so select; and people of fashion began to titter at the poor show which the Court made of entertainment in an age renowned for the extravagances of its hospitality. The Dowager-Princess was profoundly shocked at the balls and masquerades. She could not understand what had come over her eldest son that he should encourage such entertainments; and when hints that such ‘goings-on’ ought to be speedily discontinued were not immediately taken she made a public parade of her disapproval by refusing to allow Prince William [shortly before created Duke of Gloucester] and his brother, Prince Henry, to attend them.

In due course the Queen’s relations came over from Germany to stay with her; and when it was discovered that neither expense nor effort was spared to make their stay both profitable and pleasurable there was a good deal of comment, particularly among those members of the aristocracy, who by the right of birth were entitled to be invited to Court but who never received invitations owing to their political views. Eighteenth-century Society was so wrapped up in its conventions, and its members held such distorted views about their ‘rights and privileges,’ that the smallest offence was quickly magnified into an irremediable grievance.

The summer of 1762 passed, and with it vanished some of the happiest moments in George’s life. A dislike of entertainment, shared by Charlotte, the constant reminders by his mother that balls and masquerades were the works of the Devil, the studied indifference of members of Society to the Court entertainments, all conspired to wrest from the King and Queen the means of getting to know their more important subjects. But it

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could not be otherwise at a time when political differences divided Society irreconcilably; and George's and Charlotte's failure to make their Court the dictator of Fashion was inevitable as long as party rancours existed in their worst and most virulent forms.

“Guerre de Pots de Chambre”

ON BUTE'S RESIGNATION George Grenville became Prime Minister. The political gossips declared that Bute was responsible for the choice, believing that Grenville would be a complacent person to deal with and that he would not challenge Bute's position as 'the power behind the throne.' But that is not quite the truth. Bute no doubt did suggest to the King that Grenville ought to have his place: indeed there seems to have been a promise that once the peace proposals were safely through Parliament Bute would resign in Grenville's favour [see page 56].

Grenville, who sat a Member for the borough of Buckingham, was not distinguished by qualities of political leadership. Horace Walpole described him

as a fatiguing orator and indefatigable drudge, more likely to disgust than to offend.

But notwithstanding his defects as a parliamentarian he was a sound man, with a good record of public service. He was first elected to Parliament in 1740, and almost immediately joined the 'Patriots'; but he subsequently held minor Government office in Pelham's time, and during the Pitt-Newcastle Administration he came into the forefront of political life. Pitt was married to his sister: Temple was his brother; but he nevertheless stood out against them on the question of bringing the 'German War' to an end, and when they resigned their offices he remained, serving first with Newcastle and later with Bute.

Whatever Grenville's defects may have been as a political leader he was not a 'place-hunter.' Unlike so many of his political contemporaries he was thoroughly disinterested; and he enjoyed the reputation of having a good business head and

of being ‘a religious good man.’ When Henry Fox was called in to ‘manipulate’ the majority in Parliament at the time when the peace proposals were to be discussed by both Houses the King told Grenville that it was necessary to use bad men to govern bad men. Why was it necessary to make such an explanation? The inference is that Grenville was the one man in the Government likely to be disgusted at the use of such dis honourable methods, and that the King felt that it was necessary to justify his action with him. For Grenville was an upright and honourable man, whose private life was above reproach.

These qualities, and his respect for religion, would at once make him a *persona grata* with the King. George undoubtedly would have preferred a man with stronger Tory views, but he was not yet in a position altogether to dispense with men holding Whig views, and of the Whigs Grenville was infinitely the most desirable from the King’s point of view. The insinuation that his appointment was made so that Bute could retain his hold upon affairs is not supported by the facts. Grenville may have been one of the worst of George’s Prime Ministers, but he was never afraid to maintain his independence even in the face of the King, and his stubbornness, amounting as time went on to insolence, was one of the chief reasons for his political failure. His character did not suddenly change. Newcastle, who accepted the popular explanation of the appointment, remarked in a letter to Pitt:

I suppose he [Bute] hopes to retain the same power and influence out of employment that he had in it; but he may find that difficult. I question whether he has chosen the best person to act under him for that purpose.

The King and Bute were not fools. They were aware of Grenville’s political honesty; and it seems most improbable that they should have believed for a moment that such a man would connive at a system of government which would reduce him to the unenviable position of being a cat’s-paw.

Bute’s resignation also resulted in a re-shuffle of the Cabinet. On undertaking to secure majorities for the peace proposals Henry Fox had been promised a barony. On April 16th, therefore, the King created him Baron Holland. It was a dignity which he could grace most splendidly with the wealth which

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he had acquired—none too honestly, so it was said—during his tenure of office as Paymaster. Dashwood, whose lamentable failure as Chancellor of the Exchequer had done much to weaken Bute’s Ministry, was created Baron Le Despenser, thereby reviving a title which had long been in his family. Grenville decided to keep in his own hands the two offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

In the Cabinet itself the real power was shared by a ‘triumvirate’ comprising Grenville, Egremont and Halifax; and they received a certain measure of support from Bedford and his supporters. Against them were arrayed Newcastle, Hardwicke, Temple and Pitt and their respective followings, who continued to thunder against the iniquities of the Peace and the unfairness of Dashwood’s Cider Tax. It was during a debate on the latter measure that Pitt nicknamed Grenville ‘Gentle Shepherd’—a sobriquet which clung to him for the rest of his life.

* * *

MOST RELENTLESS OF the Government’s enemies was John Wilkes, the son of a London distiller and a Presbyterian mother. After completing his education at the University of Leyden—then a favourite place of higher learning with English dissenters—Wilkes made the customary Grand Tour. On his return to England he was persuaded by his parents to marry Mary Mead, the only daughter of a wealthy London grocer. It was not long before Mrs Wilkes discovered that she had little in common with her brilliant young husband—for brilliant Wilkes was both as a scholar and as a wit; and a separation was negotiated which left Wilkes in control of their only daughter and bestowed upon him a goodly portion of his wife’s fortune.

Wilkes had early given himself over to a life of profligacy. He was a member of the *Hell-Fire Club*, and of the infamous ‘*Order of St Francis*.’ The latter, named after its founder, Sir Francis Dashwood, was a fraternity of debauched young men who met in a ruined Cistercian abbey at Medmenham, on Dashwood’s property. It was Dashwood who admitted Wilkes into the ‘*Order*’: the new member was given a warm welcome by the other members, his ready wit finding the highest level of expression in obscenity and blasphemy. Among his friends were the Earl of Sandwich and Thomas Potter, the latter being

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the son of Archbishop Potter of Canterbury. Their orgies at Medmenham are indescribable: in the lewdest forms they parodied the services of the Catholic Church, and in their professed worship of Bacchus and Venus thought fit, so it is said, to administer the Sacrament to a monkey.

Dashwood, Potter and Sandwich were prominent members of that section of the Whig Party which supported Pitt; and as early as 1754, when Wilkes was little more than twenty-seven years of age, they used their influence to secure their friend's appointment as High Sheriff for Buckinghamshire, in which county he had an estate. In 1754 Wilkes unsuccessfully contested Berwick-on-Tweed, but three years later he was elected Member of Parliament for the borough of Aylesbury; and he was again returned to Parliament by that constituency during the General Election of 1761. In the following year he secured through Temple's influence a colonelcy in the Bucks Militia.

Wilkes was never a success as a parliamentarian. He spoke badly and invariably bored his hearers; but he had a knack of being able to get on with people. Edward Gibbon, who spent a 'very debauched day' in his company in 1762, declared:

I scarcely ever met with a better companion. He has inexhaustible spirits, infinite wit and humour, and a great deal of knowledge. He told us himself, that in this time of public dissension he was resolved to make his fortune.

There was also a certain fascination in the man's ugliness. William Hogarth's famous cartoon, the ornament of thousands of homes when the cry of 'Wilkes and Liberty' was on men's lips, revealed with all the exaggerations of caricature the squint, the protruding lower jaw and lecherous features of one who himself confessed that he never once

hung over the glassy stream, like another Narcissus, admiring the image in it, nor that he ever stole an amorous look at his counterfeit in a side mirror.

Wilkes, too well aware of the worth of his ugliness, especially with the ladies, could afford to treat his lack of beauty generously.

There is little doubt that his intense hatred of Bute's Administration was the outcome of thwarted ambition and not of a burning desire to champion popular liberties. Women and wine

had whittled away his own and his wife's fortunes: he was at his wits' end for money. Why should he not do what so many others had done, and were doing—attempt to rehabilitate his fallen fortunes by securing some kind of lucrative State office? He was desperately eager to be sent as the Ambassador to Constantinople: he could then acquaint himself with the refinements of vice practised by the Turk! He also wanted the post of Governor-General of the newly-constituted province of Quebec. But his luck was out; and instead of blaming his profligate life for the lack of confidence which King and Ministers had in him he took it into his head that Bute personally had thwarted his designs. That thought ate like a canker into his distorted mind; and unconsciously it cast him in the role of a champion of popular liberties.

* * *

EVEN BEFORE GEORGE had ascended the throne journalistic criticism of the government of the day had reached a high level of acrimony and abuse, chiefly through the columns of *The Monitor*, which though little more than a miserable weekly pamphlet was capably edited by John Entick. To meet the often uninformed criticisms of *The Monitor* Bute had founded two 'inspired' journals—*The Briton* and *The Auditor*: the former was under the editorship of the novelist, Tobias George Smollett.

In 1762 Wilkes and Charles Churchill founded *The North Briton*. At once a new fashion was set in journalistic criticism. No longer were names discreetly veiled by initials, but, as Horace Walpole noted,

the highest names, whether of statesmen or magistrates were printed at length, and the insinuations went still higher.

In Churchill, already famous as a satirist through his *Rosciad* and *Apology*, Wilkes had the help of a colleague as able and as unscrupulous as himself; and together they set out to embarrass the Government. That their criticisms were without fear or favour may be true, but there was only one butt for their attack —Bute, who never received at their hands those ordinary courtesies of fair-play which are accorded even to the most implacable enemy. The title of the journal was studiously meant to insult; and in the earlier numbers gratuitous abuse was heaped

upon Bute's fellow-countrymen. Nor did they stop at that: they compared the King to Edward III, his mother to Queen Isabella, and Bute to Roger Mortimer; and they laid the lash of their scorn unmercifully upon Dashwood and his Cider Tax. Even though it meant breaking with old friends Wilkes was resolved to repair his broken fortunes: it was soon made clear that there was money in *The North Briton*.

Many times the King and Bute must have writhed uncomfortably under Wilkes's and Churchill's abusive attacks; but they had the good sense to ignore them; and it would have been better for all concerned—except Wilkes—had this policy been followed to the end. Whether it was the King or Grenville who first suggested departing from this rule it is difficult to say. Probably it was Grenville: knowing the character of Wilkes and Churchill, and fearing lest their attacks on his Administration would undermine its influence in the country to the same extent as it had undermined Bute's Administration, he might reasonably have resolved to call what appeared uncommonly like a huge piece of bluff. It would not have been difficult to persuade the King of the wisdom and expediency of such a course of action: in fact George's chief complaint against Bute was that he shrank from drastic action of any kind against the King's enemies, and the knowledge that Grenville was a very different kind of person must have pleased George tremendously.

Soon after Grenville's appointment as Premier Wilkes happened to call upon Temple, whom he found discussing the political situation with Pitt. They had before them a draft copy of the King's Speech to be delivered at the opening of the next parliamentary session: how they got it is not known; but they were convinced, after a perusal of its contents, that there was to be no change of policy under Grenville, and they inferred that this was the outcome of Bute's influence with the King. Wilkes, who had joined in the discussion, went home and composed the famous Number XLV of *The North Briton*, which made its appearance on April 23rd, four days after the opening of Parliament.

The contents of that number were not more libellous than those of its predecessors; but in one place it was deliberately insinuated that the King himself was party to a falsehood. The Government's claim that the Peace of Hubertsberg [by which

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France and Prussia came to terms] was a direct and satisfactory outcome of the Peace of Paris was stigmatized by Wilkes in his article as

the most abandonned instance of ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed on mankind.

Wilkes tried to persuade his readers that he was not attacking the King. He wrote :

The King’s Speech has always been considered by the legislature and by the public at large as the speech of the Minister.

But the shaft had gone home, as he meant it to go home : he had insolently impugned the King’s honour, and depicted Grenville as a puppet in the royal hands. There was studied insolence, too, in the statement :

Every friend of his country must lament that a prince of so many great and amiable qualities, whom England truly reveres, can be brought to give the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures and to the most unjustifiable public declarations from a throne ever renowned for truth, honour, and unsullied virtue.

The compliment which the statement contained was wholly obscured by the sneering insinuation which followed it.

The King and Grenville agreed to submit a copy of Number XLV to the Law Officers of the Crown—Sir Fletcher Norton [later Lord Grantley] and Charles Yorke, Hardwicke’s son. The former was the Solicitor-General; the latter, the Attorney-General. They gave it as their opinion that the Number examined by them contained

a most infamous and seditious libel, tending to inflame the minds and alienate the people from his Majesty, and to incite them to traitorous insurrection against the King.

They also stated as their opinion that Wilkes could be proceeded against.

The two Secretaries of State—Egremont and Halifax—thereupon issued a warrant

to make strict and diligent search for the authors, printers, and publishers of a seditious and treasonable paper, entitled *The North Briton*, No. 45, and these or any of them having found, to apprehend and seize, together with their papers.

The execution of the warrant was entrusted to Robert Wood, one of Halifax's secretaries. He ran Kearsley, the publisher, and Balfe, the printer, to earth: both stated in examination before Halifax that Wilkes was the author of the 'libel.' Wood was then sent to serve the warrant on Wilkes and to bring him into Halifax's presence. He visited Wilkes's house in Great George Street on the night of the 29th April. Wilkes at once refused to accept the legality of the warrant, and threatened Wood and his companions—a constable and several King's Messengers—with violence if they molested him further that night. On the following morning they again visited his house: Wood again read over the warrant; and Wilkes renewed his protest—he was not named in it, and even had he been named as a Member of Parliament he was immune from arrest.

While the argument was in progress Charles Churchill entered the room. Wilkes, quick to notice that Wood and his companions were unaware of the satirist's identity and knowing that Churchill was also 'wanted,' greeted his colleague with a

Good day, Mr Thompson. How is Mrs Thompson to-day? Does she dine in the country?

Churchill immediately grasped the drift of Wilkes's meaning. He replied that he was extremely happy to say that Mrs Thompson was in the best of health, that she was in fact waiting for him not far from the house, and that he had merely called to inquire after his friend's health before going into the country. And with that Churchill left Great George Street—and London. His escape was a bad blunder, for from his retreat 'in the country' he was able to maintain a terrible fire of satirical criticism and abuse against his friend's enemies.

Wood took Wilkes before Egremont and Halifax. To them he repeated his protest that his arrest was illegal since it violated a long-established privilege of Parliament. When argument failed to move the Secretaries of State Wilkes resorted to insolences at their expense, and they committed him to the Tower. Efforts were already being made to protect Wilkes. Temple was responsible for moving for a writ of *Habeas Corpus* directing that Wilkes should be brought before the Court of the King's Bench. There was some little delay in complying with this

rule; and in the meantime the two Secretaries of State had directed their personal secretaries to enter Wilkes’s house, search it from cellar to garret, and carry away such personal papers as might incriminate their owner.

On May 6th Wilkes came before Chief Justice Pratt [later Lord Camden] in the Court of the King’s Bench. Counsel pleaded that the commitment was illegal. He argued that a *general warrant*¹ was not good in law, and that Wilkes as a Member of Parliament could only be committed while Parliament was in session by the order of the Speaker. The case of the Government was clearly put by the counsel for the Crown. Wilkes was the author of a seditious and treasonable libel; there was a precedent for the use of *general warrants* when the public peace was threatened; and immunity from arrest did not extend in so grave a crime. Chief Justice Pratt, acting upon the admission of the Crown lawyers that Wilkes was a Member of Parliament, ordered the prisoner’s discharge on the ground that he was free from arrest during the meeting of Parliament.

Wilkes’s release was a terrible defeat for Grenville’s Administration. They had placed the crown of martyrdom on the head of a man who knew how best to wear it for his own profit; and, what was a great deal worse, to wear it to the detriment of the King’s prestige with his subjects. Hogarth’s malevolent cartoon of Wilkes, done at the instigation of the Government during the court proceedings, lost all its force when it was advertised that the painter was one of Bute’s protégés; and many people were easily persuaded that the attack upon Wilkes had from the outset been directed by the fallen minister. Churchill lashed Hogarth with his pen, and in doing so called down upon his head the cruel cartoon, *The Bruiser*, depicting

C. Churchill [once Reverend!] in the character of a Russian Hercules, regaling himself after having killed the monster *Caricatura*, that so sorely galled his *virtuous* friend, the Heaven-born Wilkes.

The ‘Russian Hercules’ was a bear bedecked with torn clerical bands and ruffle, lurching upon a copy of Philip Massinger’s *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* and *A List of the Subscribers to*

¹ No one is named in a *general warrant*. Wilkes himself described the warrant served to him as ‘a ridiculous warrant against the whole English nation.’ He was not very wide of the mark.

'The North Briton,' and holding in the fold of the right arm a foaming quart pot and in the left a cudgel on the knots of which were written 'Lye 1,' 'Lye 2,' 'Lye 3,' 'Lye 5,' 'Lye 8,' 'Lye 10,' 'Lye 12,' 'Lye 15.'

The King was furious at the part which Temple had taken in the proceedings; and the royal wrath completely broke its bounds when in dismissing Wilkes from the Bucks Militia—a step taken by the Government—Temple made a public expression of regret at the loss which the corps would sustain by the removal of such an excellent officer. George promptly sent for the Privy Council Minute Book, and with his own hand struck Temple's name from the list of members. It was a foolish act perhaps, but it was neither unconstitutional nor undeserved.

That the Crown's Law Officers had acted in good faith cannot be questioned. General warrants, originating in the procedure of the Court of the Star Chamber, had been given legal sanction under the Licencing Act passed in the reign of Charles II. That Act expired, but the practice was not discontinued, and well into the eighteenth century such warrants were issued in serious cases. Pitt himself in the debate which was subsequently devoted to general warrants admitted that he had used them; but he was careful to add that in doing so he was aware that he had acted illegally. But in reviewing the whole sorry business it is impossible to forget that sound judge though Pratt undeniably was, he was also a very good Whig, bound by strong ties of friendship to Temple and Pitt. And it was Temple who moved in the Court of the Common Pleas for the writ of *Habeas Corpus*.

Wilkes knew that there could be no retreat from the position which he had taken up: his one hope was to bludgeon his way through the forces arrayed against him. On his release from the Tower he wrote openly accusing the Secretaries of State of breaking into his house and stealing his papers; and he instituted legal proceedings against them and their officers. The case against Halifax was not finally settled until 1769, when Wilkes was awarded damages to the tune of £4000. Egremont's sudden death in August 1763 put an end to the proceedings begun against him; but Wood, Halifax's secretary, was mulcted in damages of £1000 in December 1763, when Chief Justice Pratt



THE BRUISER, C. CHURCHILL, by the Rev. Mr. Wilkes. Engraving by Mr. Wilkes. — But he had a Club this Dragon to Demb
— Heaven for Wilkes.

THE BRUISER, C. CHURCHILL

By courtesy of the British Museum

laid it down as a rule of law that a general warrant to seize the papers of a person not named is illegal.

George Grenville was an obstinate man : in the first round of the struggle the points had been awarded to Wilkes with a resultant loss of prestige for the Crown and Government. Grenville was resolved to redeem that loss no matter what the cost might be. It happened that the Government had in its possession an obscene parody of Pope's *Essay on Man* entitled *An Essay on Woman*, in an appendix of which was a blasphemous paraphrase of the *Veni Creator*. The poem was dedicated to Miss Fanny Murray, a fashionable young woman with a questionable reputation. It was printed on a press which Wilkes had installed in his home. *An Essay on Woman* was almost certainly the work of Potter, but there is little doubt that the Notes attached to it, which were in the tradition of Bishop William Warburton's Notes on Pope's *Essay on Man* and were facetiously ascribed to him, were the work of Wilkes. The paraphrase of the *Veni Creator* was possibly enough also Wilkes's work. Wilkes appears to have printed this disgusting publication solely for the enjoyment of his pornographic friends ; and only about twelve or thirteen copies were in existence.

Whig historians and Wilkes's apologists make a great parade of the fact that the book was *privately* printed for *private* circulation, inferring thereby that public morality was in no way endangered. The absurdity of such a defence is self-evident. If the publication was obscene and blasphemous [which it unquestionably was] sufficient copies were in existence to permit of a reasonably large circulation : for it is the fate of such books to be passed from hand to hand, and such would have certainly happened in the eighteenth century. The fact that the readers would almost exclusively be men holding good Whig opinions can hardly be taken as a justification for minimizing the insidious nature of their contents and the danger to public morals !

Egremont's place in the Grenville Ministry went to John Montague, Earl of Sandwich, who had been one of Wilkes's cronies in the Medmenham fraternity. But they were no longer on friendly terms. It is said that during a drunken orgy Sandwich had invoked the Devil and that at that very moment Wilkes had unloosed an ape made up like Satan, which terrified Sandwich out of his wits. Be that as it may, Sandwich was a most un-

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pleasant person, who ought not to have been in any government. Horace Walpole records how once

at a club with Mr Wilkes held at the top of the play-house in Drury Lane, Lord Sandwich talked so profanely that he drove two harlequins out of the company!

When the time came for Churchill to loose the shafts of his satire against Sandwich he made deadly use of Sandwich's reputation as one of the most foul-mouthed men of his age. In *The Duellist* he wrote :

Hear him but talk and you would swear
Obscenity itself were there,
And that Profaneness had made choice,
By way of trump, to use his voice ;
That, in all mean and low things great.
He had been bred at Billingsgate ;
And that, ascending to the earth
Before the season of his birth,
Blasphemy, making way and room,
Had mar'd him in his mother's womb.

Such was the man who was entrusted to lead the attack on Wilkes in the House of Lords. His obvious unfitness for the task weakened not a little the Government's case in the eyes of the public, and served to give added colour to the suspicion, sedulously noised abroad, that a prosecution on a charge of blasphemy was merely a convenient cloak for the victimization of a political opponent.

Parliament reassembled on November 15th. Sandwich, a copy of the offensive publication in his hand, treated the Lords to an impassioned defence of public morality, and spared no effort to indicate how it was assailed by Wilkes. His speech amused that cynical reprobate, Le Despenser, who drily observed to his neighbour that it was the first time he had heard the Devil preach ! And in the streets the mob called Sandwich Jemmy Twitcher.¹ When he resumed his seat Warburton rose ; and in a speech which ought never to have passed the lips of a bishop poured forth a torrent of invective and abuse upon Wilkes, whom he compared to the Devil in a way which compelled him

¹ *The Beggar's Opera*, Act III, Macheath : 'That Jemmy Twitcher should peach me I own surprised me.'

to apologize to Satan for the comparison!¹ The terrible force of the attack completely overwhelmed the defence, which recognized that whatever merits Wilkes may have possessed he had put himself outside the pale; and their Lordships promptly voted *An Essay on Woman* and all its contents not only ‘a most blasphemous, obscene and impious libel’ but also a grave breach of privilege on the ground that the author had attributed the Notes to a member of their assembly—Warburton. This was followed by an Address to the King in which it was urged that proceedings be at once instituted against Wilkes on a charge of blasphemy.

At the same time the attack was taking another form in the Commons. Grenville was determined not to be caught napping a second time: the Government’s plan was first to induce the Commons to vote Number XLV of *The North Briton* a seditious libel, and then to declare that the privilege of freedom from arrest did not extend to such an indictment. The former part of the plan was carried through without serious opposition. Number XLV was declared to be a ‘false, scandalous and seditious libel,’ and orders were given that it should be publicly burnt by the common hangman.

Wilkes fought back bravely. He gave the House a detailed account of the treatment which he received after service of the general warrant. His speech laid bare the danger to personal liberty, and although it could not change the minds of those men whose votes were pledged to the Government it made a profound effect upon a few disinterested members and gave his friends solid ground upon which to raise their arguments later in the debate.

One of the speakers against Wilkes was Samuel Martin, who sat for Camelford and held a minor Government office. In an earlier issue of *The North Briton* this man had been described as ‘a low fellow and a dirty tool of power.’ Martin suffered the

¹ Warburton did not escape Churchill’s bitter tongue: in *The Duellist* he was savagely attacked.

He drank with drunkards, lived with sinners,
Hered with infidels for dinners;
With such an emphasis and grace,
Blasphemed, that Potter kept not pace:
He in the highest reign of noon,
Bawled bawdy songs to a Psalm tune;
Lived with men infamous and vile,
Truck’d his salvation for a smile.

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insult in silence, but he did not forget it, and he at once took steps to make himself proficient in the use of the pistol. On November 15th he took his revenge. In the course of a speech which had very little to do with the business under discussion, except that it retailed the details of Wilkes's attack on himself, he called his vilifier a coward and a scoundrel. The charges were repeated late the same night in writing, and Martin in his letter challenged Wilkes to meet him 'with pistols' in The Ring in Hyde Park early next morning. Wilkes accepted the challenge. Martin's first shot went wide: Wilkes's pistol misfired. Martin's second shot, however, hit Wilkes in the side. The wound was deep, but not dangerous. Halifax in a despatch to the King, written soon after the news of the duel had leaked out, reported

that the Ball had been extracted, and that Mr Wilkes was not thought to be in any Danger. . . . Mr Wilkes was seen walking from the Field of Battle with his Hand on his Side.

There was a tremendous commotion in the House of Commons when the members heard what had happened. In some quarters it was hinted that the duel was a 'put-up' job, the Government having instructed Martin to call out Wilkes. Some went so far as to opine that Martin's pistol practice was also carried out with the connivance of members of the Ministry, who knew what it presaged. Eighteenth-century politicians always had the lowest opinions of their political opponents!

When the sitting opened on the 16th Wilkes's friends moved that the matter of privilege ought to be deferred until the Member for Aylesbury returned to the House; but Grenville insisted—quite rightly—that the discussions should proceed since the matter was an impersonal one, which was concerned with constitutional practice. So a terrible battle of words was joined. Halifax who had dropped in to see how the business was proceeding reported to the King that

he had the same Misfortune he has often had, of hearing Alderman Beckford talk a great deal of unjustifiable Nonsense.

William Beckford had only a week before retired from the mayoralty of London. He remained to the end a 'Wilkite,' and his influence in the City was mainly instrumental in giving

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Wilkes invaluable support during his long struggle with the Crown.

But Beckford was not alone in his defence of Wilkes. Pitt spoke forcibly against the Government's violation of the privilege of freedom from arrest. Was it not one of the most cherished privileges of Parliament? Let it be assailed or circumscribed and then the representatives of the people of England were at the mercy of the Executive. He was at pains to confine his remarks to the question of privilege only: they must not, he told his hearers, be taken to mean a defence of Wilkes. He had voted with the Government on the motion which pronounced Number XLV to be a seditious libel. He then went on to tell the House:

He condemned the whole series of North Britons, as illiberal, unmanly, and detestable. He abhorred all national reflections. The King's subjects were one people. Whoever divided them was guilty of sedition. His Majesty's complaints were well founded; it was just; it was necessary. The author did not deserve to be ranked among the human species, he was the blasphemer of his God, the libeller of his King. He had no connexion, nor did he associate or communicate with any such writer.

Pitt's speech was very impressive, and, from the Government's standpoint, very helpful. But Pitt was speaking with his tongue in his cheek. While he may have abandoned personal contacts with Wilkes he was still under the influence of Temple, who at that time was among Wilkes's staunchest friends; and [so Wilkes later informed Grafton in a letter which is a masterpiece of abuse] he was not altogether unaware of the existence of the pornographic verses, having actually seen some of them.

In the early hours of November 25th, after two days of strenuous debating, the division was taken. By 258 to 133 it was resolved

That the privilege of Parliament does not extend to the case of writing and publishing seditious libels, nor ought to be allowed to obstruct the ordinary course of the laws, in the speedy and effectual prosecution of so heinous and dangerous an offence.

On the following day the proceedings in the Commons were under discussion in the Lords. A great deal of learned argument was bandied about; and although in the end their Lordships concurred in the action taken by the Commons seventeen peers

insisted that their protest should be entered in the records of their assembly. After the usual conference the two Houses sent a loyal Address to the King, in which they sympathized with him for the indignities which he had suffered in the ‘libel.’ The Commons next commanded Wilkes to appear at the Bar of their House in a week’s time, if he was well enough to do so.

Wilkes’s case had aroused the bitterest feelings in London; and agitators were busily at work inflaming the mob to acts of violence. On all sides went up the cry of ‘Wilkes and Liberty,’ raised by men and women who had not the vaguest idea what it all meant. Ministers were openly insulted as they passed through the streets; and hostile crowds lolled in front of the royal palaces, waiting for the opportunity to abuse the King and members of his family. Wilkes’s friends were everywhere hailed with cheers; and their passage through the streets was like a badly organized Roman triumph.

London experienced an ugly riot on December 3rd, when Harley, one of the City’s sheriffs, and the common hangman, in obedience to the orders of Parliament, proceeded to burn a copy of Number XLV before the Royal Exchange. Men had little work to do in eighteenth-century London. A hostile crowd quickly collected. The small force of constables was powerless to keep the peace. Harley and the hangman were pelted with brick-bats and refuse; and finally had to go helter-skelter to the Mansion House to seek the protection of the Lord Mayor. The paper was rescued from the flames, and in a half-burnt state carried on high through the streets to Temple Bar. There a huge bonfire was lighted, and into the flames the crowd threw a jack-boot!

On December 7th there appeared at the Bar of the House of Commons a Dr Brocklesby and a Mr Graves, the physician and surgeon attending Wilkes: they stated that their patient was not in a fit state of health to appear in the House. Wilkes was thereupon given a week’s grace; but once again the two medical attendants came to say that Wilkes was not well enough to come to Westminster. The Commons were by no means convinced that Brocklesby and Graves spoke the truth. They knew that Wilkes was up and about, and that he was well enough to re-issue with copious notes all the issues of *The North Briton*. They

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nominated two medical men—Dr Heberden and Mr Cæsar Hawkins—to see Wilkes and report upon his condition after the parliamentary recess [January 19th, 1764]. Wilkes refused to see Heberden and Hawkins; but he called in two other doctors, and received from them a certificate. What that certificate said is not known; for, knowing that the game was up, Wilkes some time about Christmas fled to France, where he quickly found solace in the charms of a notorious prostitute named Corradini, whom he was able to keep on the money regularly sent to him by his friends in England.

When Parliament reassembled after the Christmas recess the Speaker read a letter which he had received from Wilkes explaining that he was not well enough to be in his place; and in support of his explanation was forwarded a medical certificate signed by two French doctors. The farce had been carried too far: it was clear that Wilkes was malingering in order to evade the authority of the House. In vain did his friends urge that the matter ought to be postponed: on January 20th, after a stormy sitting, Wilkes was expelled from the House.

The attack did not end there. Once Number XLV had been defined as a seditious libel, and *An Essay on Woman* as an impious blasphemy, the Government had instituted legal proceedings against Wilkes on charges which specified that he was responsible for the printing and publishing of these obnoxious publications. The case came up for trial before Justice [later Chief Justice] Mansfield on February 21st, 1764. Wilkes entered a defence; but he was convicted, and when he did not appear to receive sentence he was outlawed [November 1st, 1764].

* * *

HOW HAD THE King behaved during those trying months? In answering this question much has to be left to inference. There is no doubt that he welcomed all the moves which were made to remove Wilkes from the political scene. George loathed all demagogues: his deep religious convictions compelled him to abhor the kind of blasphemy and obscenity which Wilkes indulged in. A King of lesser political ability might have been disposed personally to interfere in the proceedings taken against Wilkes. George held himself regally aloof, and left the matter entirely in his Ministers’ hands. But one thing had impressed

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itself upon his mind during those months: Grenville was not the man for the premiership, and his Administration was too palpably weak to grapple with the political situation. He found himself in a most difficult position: he wished, on the one hand, to remove from office Grenville and many of his colleagues; but, on the other hand, he could not tolerate a return of 'the old gang'—the Great Whig Lords. And there was little hope of achieving the former without risking the latter.

George, who was a most methodical and business-like King, drafted in his own hand no less than five memoranda detailing the difficulties which he experienced during the five years of his reign. The fact that five such documents were drawn up indicates that he himself had some difficulty in getting the details into a proper perspective. But they all make it clear that the beginning of the trouble between the King and Grenville was the influence of Bute—or, to state it as George himself would have put it, the suspicion that such an influence existed. George averred that during the first month of the Ministry's life Grenville was in close touch with Bute, asking 'his opinion on all affairs.' Bute left London in May to take the cure at 'Harrowgate': he was away from Town for some weeks. George stated in his account of the disagreement with Grenville that

on his [Bute's] return their minds were canker'd with the most violent jealousys against him, which soon broke forth very indecently even against me.

Matters went from bad to worse. According to George's version [and there is no reason to doubt its accuracy]

their illhumour was so much encreas'd in Augt that the last time I saw the E[arl] of E[gremont] we were on the worst of terms & I was thoroughly resolv'd to Change my Ministers.

The 'illhumour' was occasioned by the knowledge that the King, made only too painfully aware of the feebleness of the Administration by the appalling lawlessness which existed everywhere in the capital, was anxious to offer the Presidency of the Council to the Earl of Hardwicke. The former Lord Chancellor was 'sounded,' but he steadfastly refused to take office unless his friend Newcastle was also given employment. Newcastle, for his part, was quite willing to serve the King, provided that

his party was restored to power. That was what George was determined should not happen.

Egremont died [Wilkes, who meant to 'call him out' had he lived, maliciously said on hearing the news of the Earl's death that he had 'been gathered to the dull of ancient days!'] on August 21st: four days later Pitt waited upon the King at Buckingham House. In his own memoranda George recorded that

the Duke of Bedford . . . had declar'd to Me the Kingdom ruin'd if Mr Pitt did not come into Office, nay even advis'd the giving him Carte Blanche.

Many others shared Bedford's views. Bute was thereupon sent to 'sound' Pitt; and as a result of their talks the audience of the 25th was arranged. Bute's part in the business at once aroused the suspicions and wrath of Grenville and his colleagues: they regarded Bute as a mischievous meddler, and were convinced that the King himself was trying to 'double-cross' them. Their 'illhumour,' therefore, was greatly intensified.

Pitt was always graciously loyal in the presence of his King, but during the audience he could not refrain from inveighing in the strongest terms against the recent Peace, which he had so relentlessly opposed. George listened with great patience to Pitt's 'lecture'; and when it was concluded he put forward his own proposition, even going so far as to say that he would offer no objection if Pitt thought fit to bring Temple with him into the Ministry. This, in view of Temple's part in the Wilkes's affair, was a very great concession. Pitt met the offer with the observation that, in his opinion, the King's interests would be best served by bringing back to power 'the Great Whig Lords.' George demurred, and Pitt was sent away to give the proposition more careful reflection. Two days later Pitt returned to the King: he repeated his advice about bringing back 'the Great Whig Lords,' and said that if it was followed he himself would be most happy to serve his sovereign. In such an eventuality, he stated, there would of necessity have to be a complete reorganization of the Government, and many of the King's friends would have to lose office. Pitt had failed to grasp the true purpose of the talks—the formation of a coalition of the best men irrespective of party ties. Loyalty to friends was one of George's weaknesses;

and he could not entertain for a moment Pitt's terms. He ended the interview with the remark :

Well, Mr Pitt, I see this will not do. My honour is concerned, and I must support it.

They parted on reasonably good terms.

Having failed to make a compact with 'the Devil' the King had next to face 'the deep blue sea.' The audience with Grenville was a painful one. George stated his case with perfect frankness and without a trace of temper. He had nothing against Grenville and his colleagues personally, but they had failed to grapple with the situation which confronted them, and it was solely with the object of giving the country a strong Administration that he had approached Pitt. He was unable to accept Pitt's terms, and consequently he was again ready to repose his entire confidence in Grenville and his colleagues, only he trusted that in the future they would act with greater firmness than they had done in the past.

Badly out of humour Grenville refused to accept the criticism that his Administration had shown any signs of weakness. He thought that the King ought to have acquainted him of the overtures made to Pitt, and not to have allowed him to find out about them himself. But what rankled most was the fact that Bute had acted as intermediary in the recent negotiations, and Grenville did not hesitate to tell the King that it was deeply resented by himself and his colleagues. George tried to reassure Grenville on this point. He said that Bute was most friendly disposed towards him [Grenville]; and he even went to the trouble of showing the Minister a letter from Bute which indicated that he [Bute] had 'the greatest regard imaginable of Mr Grenville' and advised the King 'to give his whole confidence to him.' Grenville somewhat half-heartedly suggested that in the interests of the good understanding which ought to exist between the King and his Ministers it would be best for Bute to retire from London.

That was only the beginning of the ministerial attack on Bute. Grenville himself was probably ready to accept the King's assurance that Bute was not hostile to the Ministry; but some of his colleagues were more sceptical. Sandwich, who had taken Egremont's place as one of the Secretaries of State, was

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particularly unfriendly towards Bute. He influenced Bedford, who in September joined the Ministry as President of the Council: Halifax was with them. Pressure was therefore brought to bear upon Grenville. In a letter to Bedford, Sandwich wrote:

I hope, when your Grace comes to town in the middle of the week, that you will press *this point* with Mr Grenville, who wants a little spurring in this single article.

This point had been previously defined: Bute’s

retiring from the King’s presence and councils is an absolute condition on which this Administration stands.

Well might Charles Townshend observe:

My heart bleeds for my sovereign who is thus made the sport of wrestling factions.

Poor George did not know where he was. As he noted in his memoranda foremost among those who had advocated calling in Pitt was Bedford;

yet now he termed Mr Pitt’s propositions, insolent, & that it was the duty of every honest Man to stand forth to prevent his ever coming into Administration.

In the interval Bedford had come into office: that explains his change of heart.

Pushed by his colleagues Grenville again discussed the question of Bute with the King. The only condition on which the Administration would remain in office was Bute’s removal to a distance of at least thirty miles from London. Bute himself was willing to go to his wife’s estate at Luton rather than remain in London to embarrass the King; but George was not prepared to give way without some sort of struggle. Grenville’s proposition was an iniquitous one: he [the King] had promised his confidence to the Ministry, and that ought to be sufficient. But Grenville was obdurate: either Bute must leave London or he and his colleagues would resign. The King was driven into a corner from which there was no escape. Grenville’s resignation would leave the field open to ‘the Great Whig Lords.’ He could not tolerate them. With a quiet dignity he accepted Grenville’s ultimatum, and then in the peace of his own

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room wrote an affectionate letter to Bute asking him to leave his magnificent home in Audley Street.

There was a limit to the royal concession. George had decided to give the office of Keeper of his Privy Purse [recently held by Bute] to a dear friend, Sir William Breton. Grenville protested: Breton was one of Bute's friends, and it would immediately be said that his appointment would be attributed 'to the backstairs influence of my Lord Bute.' The royal temper was immediately aroused:

Good God, Mr Grenville, am I to be suspected after all I have done? The retort had taken Grenville unawares. He could only mumble:

Not by me, sir, but such is the present language and suspicion of the world.

George, however, had his way: Breton became Keeper of the King's Privy Purse.

On Grenville's own admission George displayed not the least trace of vindictiveness towards the Ministry after the incident of Bute's 'exile' to the country. Had Grenville and his colleagues behaved as graciously as the King much unseemly bickering would have been avoided. But when Bute returned to Town in March 1764 Bedford at once accused the King of having broken the 'agreement' which he had made with the Ministry; and there were further recriminations. Throughout George never lost his dignity, but his patience was being sorely tried. He was shrewd enough to take accurate measure of the abject inefficiency of his Ministers. In his memoranda he wrote:

whenever Opposition alarm'd them they were very attentive to Me, but whenever releas'd from that their sole ideas were how to get the Mastery of the Closet.

The control of patronage was more important to them than the business of Government. Wrote George:

no Office fell vacant of ever so little value, or in the Department of any other person, that they did not claim it, & declar'd that if not comply'd with they could not serve.

It was all very embarrassing to the King.

As time went on the situation grew rapidly worse. Grenville, suspicious of Bedford whom he believed was manœuvring to

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oust him from the Ministry, vented his spleen upon the King. He was constantly ‘lecturing’ him and finding fault: he placed the worst possible interpretation on every royal action. The case of doing away with the office of Painter, mentioned by George himself in his memoranda, indicates the extent of Grenville’s overbearing behaviour.

The conduct of Mr Grenville to Mr Worstley on the determination I took of curtailing the Office of Painter was so remarkable that it deserves a place here; on the Surveyor General’s reporting to him my intentions; He had the insolence to say that if People presum’d to speak to Me on business without his previous consent, he would not serve an hour.

George’s patience in such a situation is remarkable. He himself confessed that had he given way to his feelings he would have ‘instantly dismiss’d’ Grenville. But in the public interest, so he wrote, ‘I stifl’d my sensations.’

The same pettiness was shown over the appointment of the Primate of Ireland. On Grenville’s advice George had offered the dignity to two members of the English episcopate:

yet on their declining it, He [Grenville] was much nettled at it’s being conferr’d on a very worthy Irish Bish[op] as He wish’d to hawk it about till He could by it have made a vacancy on ye Eng[lish] Bench.

Shortly before the King’s illness in January 1765 there was another ‘incident.’ On grounds of ill-health the Earl of Northumberland wished to resign his appointment as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Within a day or two the Duke of Bedford came and drop’d to Me the necessity on early fixing on a proper subject to fill that Office, & nam’d Lord Weymouth, I instantly gave him reasons why I disapprov’d of the idea, He ended with saying He recommended my examining the list of the Peerage, & that He knew I should fix on the most proper person.

There the matter ended, but during the time that George was lying ill Bedford had been cunningly working to overcome the royal opposition to his friend’s employment in Ireland, and as soon as the King was sufficiently well enough to attend to State business he was confronted with what was virtually an ultimatum

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backed by the chief members of the Ministry. First Halifax and Sandwich came to him to support Weymouth's candidature; but again the King stated his reasons why he could not consider the Viscount for such an important office; and the two Secretaries of State [according to George's version] offered no further comments. Then Grenville came on the scene.

I coolly ask'd him [wrote George in his memoranda] if He was thoroughly acquainted with the Lord whose cause he so warmly espous'd, He said no, I then gave him weighty reasons why that Lord was not calculated for the office proposed, to which he gave the most extraordinary reply, that ever was avow'd by a Man who pretended to make the advantage of the State his only rule of action that as the Duke of Bedford wish'd it, He must support it.

Once again George had his temper well under control; but his patience was now thoroughly exhausted; and he was determined to get rid of Grenville and some of his colleagues as soon as the Regency Bill was safely through Parliament.

George's illness had caused him considerable worry about the future of his baby son. There existed no proper machinery for a Regency during the minority of the sovereign; and George, knowing how seriously ill he had been and fearing lest the baby Prince would in the event of his death become a pawn in the hand of factious parties, not unnaturally was eager to remedy the defect. There is little doubt that during the greater part of January, February and March 1765 the King had been far more seriously indisposed than the country was allowed to know. He was stricken down with sickness on January 12th: his doctor, Sir William Duncan, diagnosed 'a violent cold.' But it was a malady more grievous than 'a violent cold' which kept him away from public business for such a length of time. The Court was particularly secretive, but rumours began to leak out that the King's mind was affected, and that at certain times he had to be put under restraint. It is perhaps impossible accurately to know the true nature of his illness in 1765: to-day it might be called a 'nervous breakdown,' a diagnosis which would cover a variety of kinds of mental disorder.

Although the King appears to have made a complete recovery he was still extremely nervous about his health, and lost no time in making arrangements for meeting the contingency of

a Regency. He discussed the matter first with Bedford and then with Northington, the Lord Chancellor, ' who both in the warmest & unaffected manner express'd their gratitude & approbation of ' his proposal to have a Regency Bill presented to Parliament. Grenville, on the other hand, was not so enthusiastic: according to George he ' seem'd grave & thoughtful when acquainted with ' the suggestion. But Grenville's dignity was hurt because the King had not taken him into his confidence at the outset; and in a subsequent audience he ' loudly complain'd of want of confidence ' on the King's part. The complaint, which George regarded as childish, called forth a merited rebuke: Grenville had ' no reason for claiming more ample confidence than the other Ministers.'

George had very definite ideas about the form of the proposed Bill. He wished to secure the right to nominate by will the Regent without having to divulge the name of the person so nominated. Grenville strongly opposed this suggestion. Not only would it invest the King with a power which rightly belonged to Parliament, but there is little doubt that at the back of his mind there lurked a suspicion that the King might nominate either his mother or Bute, and that would never be acceptable to the country. This point occasioned a considerable amount of discussion in the Cabinet. It was eventually settled by compromise: the King was to be allowed to nominate by will, but his choice was to be narrowed down ' to the Queen or any other person of the Royal Family usually residing in Great Britain.' This proviso disposed of Bute, but not of the Dowager-Princess. George himself, who naturally took a keen personal interest in a matter which touched him so nearly, was quite content with compromise.

It is impossible to absolve Grenville of complicity in a piece of ugly intrigue against the Dowager-Princess. There was a belief in certain quarters of the Ministry that the King was a consumptive. It was argued that his end could not long be delayed. By the terms of the Regency Bill, as outlined in the King's Speech on the opening of the new session, George was free, if he so desired, to nominate as Regent his mother, which would immediately restore Bute to a position of paramount importance in the Government. To have presented a Bill in which the Dowager-Princess was excluded by name was clearly

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out of the question, for the King would never have sanctioned a measure which publicly insulted his own mother. What, then, was the alternative? To secure the exclusion of the Dowager-Princess in Parliament. That seemed a certainty. Sandwich, Bedford and—perhaps less resolutely—Halifax were determined to deprive the King of the right to name his mother as Regent. It is inconceivable that Grenville was not aware of their views on this important matter.

The presentation of the Regency Bill in the House of Lords was followed by a good deal of wordy argument. Who constituted 'the Royal Family'? Had marriage made the Queen an Englishwoman? What was the position of the Dowager-Princess? What was the status of the King's uncle and brothers? It was Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond, who put an end to these casuistries by formally moving that the King's mother should be declared eligible for the office of Regent. His motion was lost. What happened next is not accurately known; but apparently Halifax and Sandwich saw the King and acquainted him with what had happened in the House of Lords. It is not difficult to imagine the royal disappointment: George was a loving and dutiful son, who was closely attached to his mother. Sandwich as the more audacious of the two Secretaries of State then suggested to the King that there was only one way of avoiding an unseemly debate around his mother's name: the King himself should make a declaration to the effect that she was ineligible for the office of Regent. There was no sacrifice too great to make to shield his mother from insult. The poor man consented to do what the Secretaries of State had advised. Not long after they had left the royal presence Grenville waited upon the King, who at once informed him of the talk with Halifax and Sandwich. There is no evidence to show that the Prime Minister was man enough to repudiate the action of his colleagues.

Horace Walpole related that Bedford 'almost danced about the House for joy' when the Lords were told by Sandwich that the King wished to exclude his own mother from the Regency. It was a blow which the friends of the Dowager-Princess had never expected: there was nothing more that they could do. Lord Chancellor Northington, however, was not prepared to spare his colleagues: in an audience with the King he frankly

told him that his action was most improper. Northington's words only served to confirm George in the view which in the interval he himself had formed—that he had been duped; and when he saw Grenville he told him so plainly. Grenville himself has left an account of this interview. The King was extremely distressed, and he spoke with great emotion. What would happen if the Opposition in the House of Commons carried a motion against the Government's proposal? Grenville tried to escape responsibility by laying all the blame on Halifax and Sandwich. His defence was not convincing. When he left the King was in tears.

The King's fears were realized when after the introduction of the Bill in the Commons the Member for Abingdon [Morton, who was Chief Justice of Chester] moved that the Dowager-Princess be declared eligible for employment under a Regency. He was ably supported by a number of the friends of the Dowager-Princess, and in the teeth of a Government opposition, which naturally could not extend itself on such a personal matter, the motion was carried, some of the Opposition voting for it and others leaving the House before the question was put. Grenville and his friends had failed to realize that their own unpopularity in the country had secured a signal triumph for the King's mother. And in the House of Lords Halifax, 'making the most abject and contemptible figure one can imagine,' was compelled to eat his own words in asking the Lords to put back the name of the King's mother into the Regency Bill.

While the Regency Bill was before Parliament the King was once again able to give a display of that personal courage and royal graciousness which never failed to win the admiration of his subjects. A bill to improve the lot of the weavers of Spital-fields, who had suffered grievously from foreign competition, was rejected by the Lords, chiefly through the opposition of Bedford. The Commons, however, had passed the measure; and once the news got round that the Lords had thrown out the Bill the poor weavers thronged to Westminster in person to state their grievances. Their wretched condition made it impossible for them to put a curb on their passions. There were ugly scenes in the neighbourhood of Westminster; and many of the Lords were subjected to violence at their hands. Bedford, in particular, was the object of their hate: they swarmed around his magnificent

house in Bloomsbury, and the military were sent to protect him from their wrath.

In the meantime, however, the weavers had gone to see the King. They had heard that he was at Richmond, but on arriving there they learnt that he was holding a review of his troops at Wimbledon, and they hastened after him. The weavers' leaders begged an audience: it was immediately granted. The King showed them the greatest kindness and listened to their grievances: he promised that he would do all he could to assist them. Nothing could have been more graciously done: the weavers, pouring out blessings upon the King, marched back in orderly fashion to London. But the worst elements in the mob were bent upon making the occasion an excuse for riot; and the subsequent disorders, directed chiefly against Bedford, jeopardized the weavers' case. But the memory of the King's sympathetic hearing of their grievances lived long in Spitalfields.

The hash which the Ministers had made of the Regency Bill exhausted the royal patience. George had suffered much at the hands of Grenville and his colleagues—more than the world will ever know: he had borne their insolences patiently in the firm belief that a political upheaval would have been detrimental to the best interests of his people; and the fact that he may have been mistaken in that view cannot be allowed to detract from the sincerity of his own convictions. Office had only served to emphasize an arrogance which was natural in Grenville. Unwittingly perhaps he went out of his way to make the King's position as difficult as possible. George once told Bute:

When he [Grenville] has wearied me for two hours, he looks at his watch to see if he may not tire me for an hour more.

From Grenville's own words it can be proved that their talks were often distressingly unhappy experiences for the King.

The King during this conversation seemed extremely agitated and disturbed: he changed countenance and flushed so much that the water stood in his eyes from the excessive heat of his face.

This is Grenville's record of an interview at the end of April 1765. One is tempted to ask how far the worries suffered during the period of Grenville's Administration were responsible for the terrible malady which finally robbed the King of his sanity.

‘ GUERRE DE POTS DE CHAMBRE ’

IN THE MIDST of the unhappiness occasioned by the ministerial bungling of the Regency Bill there shone a ray of hope. Northumberland suggested to George that he ought to take into his confidence his uncle, Cumberland, who had a certain amount of influence with the leaders of the Opposition. The Duke, who coarsely but not inaptly described the political bickerings as a *Guerre de Pots de Chambre*, was only too delighted to be of assistance to his nephew. He hastened to him at Richmond; and they talked matters over. In a note on the interview Cumberland wrote:

The King, the better to put me *au fait* of the true state of his affairs, went through in a masterly and exact manner all that had passed since Lord Bute's resigning the Treasury. He also went through Mr Pitt's two audiences of August 1763; particularizing with great justice the characters of several persons who are now upon the stage or who are but just dropped off.

The upshot of the interview was that Cumberland should see Pitt and attempt to persuade him to form a Ministry. This Cumberland did, but Pitt would not commit himself without first sounding Temple. A second interview took place, at which Temple was present. Pitt himself would have accepted Cumberland's invitation; but Temple, who had a day or so previously been reconciled with his brother, George Grenville, would not co-operate with him; and without Temple's support Pitt would not take office. Of Temple's bearing during that interview Cumberland wrote:

I cannot help saying that I think he was more verbose and pompous than Mr Pitt.

The breakdown of these negotiations was a terrible blow for the King. In his memoranda he noted his pathetic plight.

This drove Me to ye most cruel of all necessitys the keeping those Men yt I thought neither from the weight, abilitys, nor dutiful deportment worthy of their Stations.

The fact that the King had again approached Pitt infuriated Grenville and his colleagues. They rated George for what they liked to think of as his duplicity: they wrung concessions from him as the price of remaining in office. The nature of those

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concessions can be seen from a letter which George wrote on May 23rd to his friend John Perceval, Earl of Egmont:

LORD EGMONT—I have nothing new to say I sent for Greenville [sic] at twelve last night & answer'd his questions thus.

1°. that Lord Bute should not be consulted by me in Public Affairs.

2°. that they might make use of other persons in the management of Scotch affairs than Mr Mackenzie; but that as to his office I had when he obtain'd it refus'd the making it for life but had promis'd him that if ever I took patronage from him, I never would take the office also.

3°. that after what had pass'd with the D. of Cumberland I was engag'd to put him alone at the Head of the Army, that the Duke had again reminded me of my promise, that I had seen Ld Granby who declar'd I could not in honour do otherwise.

4°. that they may dispose of the Paymaster's Office & of the Lieutenancy of Ireland.

The 'Mr Mackenzie' of the letter was James Stuart Mackenzie, who was Bute's brother; and the fact that he had been compelled to repudiate a promise made to Mackenzie hurt George more than any of their other insolences. Grenville and his friends were determined to oust Holland from the Paymaster's office, which was reserved for Charles Townshend; and Bedford had at last gained his point that Weymouth should have the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. Wrote Horace Walpole to Francis Seymour Conway, the Marquis of Hertford:

You have more than once seen your old Master [George II] reduced to surrender up his Closet to a Cabal; but never with such circumstances of insult, indignity and humiliation.

Grenville and his colleagues had forgotten their places: they bullied the King believing that in his fear of 'the great Whig Lords' he would not dispense with their services. Bedford's attitude was particularly offensive.

Tho not able to remove them [wrote George himself] I could not be so wanting to myself as to treat them otherwise yⁿ Jailers, this coldness to them added to a similar Conduct with regard their familys & Dependents, made the D[uke] of B[edford] come before he went out of Town & draw a paper out of his pocket wherein He declared yt. the coldness I shew'd him and his followers, and

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the countenance I shew'd Men he did not like made him & his colleagues resolves to retire if I did not by the time He return'd to Town treat them with cordiality & frown on whomever they did not like.

George heard Bedford in silence: afterwards he confessed that had he not ‘broken out into a profuse perspiration’ his ‘indignation would have suffocated’ him.

He was resolved that ‘this insolence was not to be brooked.’ Once again he sent for his uncle Cumberland to ask him to help him. Together they decided that the only hope of salvation lay in winning over Pitt. On June 17th, at the King’s request, Grafton went to Pitt’s home at Hayes to ask the ‘great Commoner’ to wait upon his sovereign. Two days later George and Pitt met in Buckingham House. George himself was determined to do everything in his power to win over Pitt: before the interview he elaborately drew up in his own handwriting a memorandum detailing the ‘Heads of My conversation with Mr Pitt,’ and it reveals clearly his anxiety to let bygones be bygones. Pitt tabled his terms: he himself and Grafton were to be the Secretaries of State, while Temple was to become the First Lord of the Treasury. George accepted these conditions without demur: his one wish was to give his country an Administration which would rule resolutely and enable him to ‘recover his character.’ Pitt left the royal presence to discuss the proposals with his political colleagues, promising that after he had seen them he would wait again upon the King. Sandwich, the only Minister in Town, learnt that Pitt had been received in audience at Buckingham House; and he at once wrote to Grenville urging him to return from the country. Grenville replied:

When I took leave of the King I asked his permission to stay in the country till Tuesday next, which he granted to me. My return to Town before that time, uncalled for, will have the appearance of a desire to embarrass the arrangement which he is now endeavouring to form, and which I need not tell you will come on, or go off, just the same whether I am there or not; as the King would not in the present situation communicate it to me, and, without that, I certainly should not trouble him on the subject.

Grenville was staying with his brother Temple at Stow; and he was therefore well acquainted with the moves which were being

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made, for Pitt in a letter to Temple had related what had transpired during his talks with the King. Incidentally he told Temple how graciously he had been received.

I will only say that things have advanced considerably in the audience of this day. The first audience was, as this, infinitely gracious, but not equally material. Upon the whole I augur much good, as far as intentions go; and I am indeed touched with the manner and royal frankness which I had the happiness to find.

On June 24th Temple went to Hayes: next day with Pitt he waited upon the King at Buckingham House. To the King's and Pitt's surprise Temple refused to co-operate in the formation of a new Ministry: the reason for his decision he preferred not to mention, but it was 'of a tender and delicate nature,' and the only inference is that either he thought that he was not acting fairly to his brother George or feared that he would be reduced to political impotence by serving under his more popular and assertive brother-in-law, Pitt. Temple's defection, described by Pitt himself as an 'amputation,' dashed George's hopes to the ground, for he knew that Pitt would not serve without his brother-in-law.

Cumberland again rallied to his nephew's side. He saw Newcastle, and begged him to use his great influence with his friends in the Whig party to form a government. Newcastle's task was no easy one: the great party which he had helped to create was torn by dissensions and jealousies; and it was only with the greatest difficulty that he could at length get together under the leadership of the Marquis of Rockingham a team of politicians willing to shoulder the burdens of government.

George was overjoyed at his uncle's success. It is true that he found it difficult to be attracted by the personnel of the new Ministry; but it was the means to an end which he had sought so long—the dismissal of Grenville and his insufferable colleagues. On July 10th, 1765, Lord Chancellor Northington commanded Grenville to attend at St James's Palace to resign into the King's hand his seal of office. More curt was the dismissal of Bedford: there was no official communication, but the request to resign his seal of office came from Grafton, one of the members of the new Ministry. In a final audience Grenville asked the King why he had forfeited his confidence; and he received the very obvious

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reply that the King could have no confidence in Ministers who used their power so arrogantly. George wrote in his account of the negotiations which preceded the change of Ministers :

On dismissing the late Ministers justice to my much injur'd friend Lord Bute made me assure Mr Greenville that He had no personal share in the Change of the Ministry & that he had not interfer'd during the course of that Administration either as to Persons or Measures.

Grenville did not believe this : he was confident that it was Bute who had ousted him from office.

The King's Friends

HERE WERE NO outstanding political personalities in the new Ministry. But in the main the Ministers were honourable men who had a high conception of public duty, and they entered office with a determination to govern resolutely. They were only too painfully aware of the precariousness of their position in Parliament. They knew that they would have to meet the hostility of the factions dominated by Grenville and Bedford respectively: it was not to be anticipated that they would receive any sympathetic treatment at the hands of Pitt: it was generally suspected that their actions would be thwarted by the intrigues of Bute. Before taking office, therefore, they wrung from the King a promise that he would not consult Bute on political questions. The King resented having to make that promise: knowing that the new Government were aware that he had made such a promise to Grenville he felt that they ought to have trusted him to keep it.

Charles Watson-Wentworth, Marquis of Rockingham, had not previously held high political office. He had been one of the Grooms of the Bedchamber—a position which brought him into contact with the King, who had no great opinion of his qualities.

I thought [said George] that I had not two men in my Bedchamber of less parts than Lord Rockingham.

But George misjudged the Marquis: a far better estimate of Rockingham's worth was made by Burke, who described him as a man of 'sound principles, enlarged mind, clear and sagacious sense, and unbroken fortitude.' Great wealth had not ruined his character. He loved his country deeply, and was willing to

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serve her even though service entailed sacrifice on his part; he was incapable of playing a double game; and inspired the confidence of his followers. His self-consciousness made it difficult for him to speak in public. George once said to him :

I am much pleased that Opposition has forced you to hear your own voice, which I hope will encourage you to stand forth in other debates.

Whether he was being sarcastic or sincerely trying to encourage Rockingham is difficult to know; but the Marquis's speeches, it is said, always commanded 'attention, not from the enthusiasm aroused by the persuasive arguments of the orator, but from the confidence placed in the thorough integrity and good sense of the man.' On taking office he went to the Treasury.

Newcastle thought that the Treasury should have gone to him; but when Rockingham promised him control of much of the patronage—particularly in the Church—the old Earl waived his claim, and contented himself with the office of Lord Privy Seal. Northington remained on the Woolsack; the Earl of Winchilsea was Lord President of the Council; and Harcourt became Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. The Admiralty went to one of the King's staunchest friends—Egmont: the Ordnance, to the Marquis of Granby. Charles Townshend retained the office of Paymaster; William Dowdeswell, who sat for Worcester, was Chancellor of the Exchequer; and General Conway and the Duke of Grafton were the two Secretaries of State.

Henry Conway was a better soldier than politician. On the field of battle he had won a deservedly high reputation for personal courage. Twitting him on his lack of political courage George Stanhope once said :

I don't pretend to be like Henry Conway, who walks up to the mouth of a cannon with as much coolness and grace as if he was going to dance a minuet.

In the House of Commons, which he entered at the age of twenty through the influence of his uncle Sir Robert Walpole, Conway was consistently 'a good Whig'; and since 1760 had been numbered among the most outspoken of the Government's critics. His championship of Wilkes lost him his military offices; but he bore the King no grudge; and at the request of his

friend, Cumberland, he had joined the new Ministry, though conscious all the time that he was ill-fitted for the task. As a Minister Conway was a failure: he was irresolute to the point of weakness, and left the impression upon the minds of his friends and enemies that he was for ever playing to the gallery.

Nor can it be said that Grafton was cut out for the profession of politician. His chief interest was sport: rumour had it that on one occasion a Cabinet meeting was postponed so that the Duke might be at Newmarket for the racing. His connection with Nancy Parsons, who became Lady Maynard, was the talk of the Town. Horace Walpole thought the lady was ‘one of the commonest creatures in London’; but Lady Temple, who by no means approved of her, described her as being ‘very pious,’ and related how she ‘reproves his Grace for swearing and being angry, which he owns is very wrong, and, with great submission, begs her pardon for being so ill-bred before her.’ It was not the easiness of the lady’s virtue which caused so much offence to Grafton’s many enemies: it was the fact that she used her great influence over her ‘friend’ to prevent him breaking with Pitt.

A great effort was made to secure at least the neutrality of Pitt. Rockingham persuaded the King to create Chief Justice Pratt Baron Camden: the honour was everywhere applauded. James Grenville, one of Pitt’s brothers-in-law, was made Vice-Treasurer of Ireland; and Thomas Nuthall, who was Pitt’s legal adviser, was appointed the Solicitor to the Treasury. But the ‘Great Commoner’ was not to be won over by these favours to his friends: he was from the start sceptical about the ability of the new Ministers to handle the political situation; and he was so bitterly hostile to Newcastle that he could never forgive him for the part which he had played in taking office and thereby dividing the Whig Party.

Ill-luck dogged the steps of the Rockingham Administration almost from the beginning of its career. First came the death of Cumberland in October: the Duke had been the man who had brought them to power, and his influence had been constantly used to prevent divisions among them. Then followed the news of the unrest in the North American colonies, occasioned by Grenville’s Stamp Act.¹ Debates in the House of Commons in particular had made it abundantly clear that opinion was sharply

¹ The Revolt of the American Colonies will be dealt with in Chapter VI.

divided on the question of what to do with the rebellious colonists ; and Pitt's impassioned eloquence had been poured out in defence of the colonists. He charged the Ministry with withholding from Parliament the information which they had of the unhappy state of affairs prevailing in the colonies : he insinuated that the Ministers had been subjected to ' an overruling influence ' at Court. But Conway immediately rose to dispel the Bute bogey.

An overruling influence has been hinted at. I see nothing of it ; I feel nothing of it. I disclaim it for myself, and, as far as my discernment can reach, for all the rest of His Majesty's Ministers.

Evidence conclusively proves that there was no foundation for the charge that Bute was still exerting any influence over the King : after 1765 he withdrew from the political scene, and George himself was particularly anxious never to give the slightest colour to the insinuation that he was in communication with his old friend.

Rockingham found himself in a quandary. He and many of his colleagues shared Pitt's opinions on the American question. They had stoutly opposed Grenville's Stamp Act. On the other hand, in their councils were men who had taken the opposite view ; and they were aware that the King himself, at the time that the Stamp Act was being debated in Parliament, was in favour of ' firmness.' Unanimity on the question within the Cabinet was impossible : to attempt to require it would bring about the collapse of the Administration. In this difficulty, therefore, Rockingham seems to have advocated the wisdom of bringing Pitt into the Government. After Pitt's shattering attack on the Stamp Act he wrote to the King :

That your Majesty's present Administration will be shook to the greatest degree, if no further attempt is made to get Mr Pitt to take a cordial part, is much too apparent to be disguised.

But the King, knowing that Pitt's admission to the Administration would necessitate a fairly drastic re-shuffling of ministerial offices, looked upon the suggestion with disfavour. He stated his reasons to Rockingham in the plainest language : he was unwilling, he wrote,

to risk either my dignity or the continuance of my administration, by a fresh treaty with that gentleman [Pitt], for if it should miscarry all public opinion of this ministry would be destroyed by such an attempt.

Rockingham, therefore, reluctantly consented to stick to his guns.

At every stage the measure to repeal Grenville's Stamp Act was most hotly assailed in Parliament. In the Lords Camden and in the Commons Pitt poured out a torrent of shattering criticism against the claim that it was legally defensible to tax the American colonists. Bedford, Temple and Grenville stoutly maintained the same view. Many members of the Royal Household shared their opinions. It was at once suspected that the King himself was secretly endeavouring to undermine the influence of his Ministers : it was openly hinted that in this he was acting under the advice of Bute. But was the suspicion well-founded? In the first place the decision to repeal the Stamp Act put George himself in an unenviable position. He was to be asked to repudiate an action which Parliament had taken only a short time previously. He feared that repeal would be interpreted as an admission of weakness by the Mother Country ; and he disliked all appearances of weakness in government. At the same time he was averse to the use of force in this case ; and he believed that a modification of the terms of the Stamp Act might be the proper form of conciliation to take. Many of his own Household were more unyielding in their opinions : taking their stand on the belief that Parliament at Westminster had the right to tax colonists in America they were whole-hearted in favour of Grenville's demands for rigorous enforcement of the Stamp Act. George thereupon let it be known that they were at liberty to vote against the Government without running the risk of incurring his displeasure. It was a foolish decision to take, but at least it was the act of an honourable man. Once he himself was convinced that there was no alternative to enforcement but repeal he magnanimously accepted the latter solution. To Rockingham he wrote :

I am now, and have been heretofore, for modification ; but that when many were for enforcing I was then for a repeal of the Stamp Act.

That calmed Rockingham's worst fears and cooled the ardour of the wildest spirits in the Household who fought hard for enforcement. In point of fact the King watched with the liveliest interest the progress of Rockingham's Repeal Bill through Parliament ; and on more than one occasion he went out of his way to congratulate the Prime Minister and his colleagues on

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the majorities which they secured. On March 18th the Bill received the Royal Assent. [See pages 160-1.]

The Rockingham Ministry was riven with disloyalty, and it came from the side of men who were supposed to be pillars of strength in Whiggery. Grafton's behaviour in the House of Lords in April, when he publicly stated that the Administration lacked 'authority, dignity and extension' and said that 'if Mr Pitt would give his assistance he should with pleasure take up the spade and dig in the trenches,' was as reprehensible as it was remarkable. Grafton left the Ministry in May, and his place was taken by the Duke of Richmond. More disturbing was the disloyalty of Northington, for he had great influence with the King. That Northington was never happy with his colleagues is understandable, but that was his fault, for he was a coarse-mannered, hard-swearing person who had nothing in common—except allegiance to Whig principles—with the best in Rockingham's Ministry. Their disagreement came to a head on the subject of the new constitution for Canada; and Northington resigned. But he had already undermined Rockingham's influence at Court, assuring George that nothing could save the existing Administration from collapse and suggesting to him that he ought again to consult Pitt. George unwisely took Northington's advice. He had never had much faith in his Ministers' ability to grapple with the more difficult problems of government; and he was offended undoubtedly at the way in which they had reversed previous legislation. They had done away with the unpopular Cider Tax, which created such a furore in Bute's and Grenville's days; and had by resolution in Parliament declared the illegality of general warrants. Both measures, in George's opinion, were put through in order to win favour in the country; and he had a profound dislike of any form of popularity hunting.

The letters which passed between the King and Pitt in July 1766 were almost extravagant in their graciousness.

Richmond Monday
July 7th 1766

MR PITT—Your very Dutiful & handsome conduct the last Summer makes Me desirous of having Your thoughts how an Able & Dignify'd Ministry may be form'd; I desire therefore You will come for this salutary purpose to Town.

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I cannot conclude without expressing how entirely my ideas concerning the basis on which a new Administration should be erected, are consonant to the opinion You gave on that Subject in Parliament a few days before you set out for Somersetshire.

I convey this through the Channel of the Earl of Northington, as there is no man in my service on whom I so thoroughly rely, and who I know agrees with Me so perfectly in the contents of this letter.

GEORGE R.

SIR—Penetrated with the deepest Sense of Your Majesty's boundless Goodness to me, and with a Heart overflowing with Duty and Zeal for the Honour and Happiness of the most Gracious and benign Sovereign, I shall hasten to London, as fast as I possibly can; happy could I change Infirmitiy into Wings of Expedition, the sooner to be permitted the High Honour to lay at your Majesty's Feet the poor but sincere offering of the small Services of Your Majesty's most dutifull Subject and most devoted Servant

WILLIAM Pitt.

*July ye 8th
1766.*

Even before Pitt's answer came to hand the King had made up his mind to dismiss the Rockingham Ministry—a clear indication that he was resolved to allow Pitt to have *carte blanche*. Horace Walpole maintained that George behaved with marked courtesy towards the outgoing Ministers; but there is no evidence in support of this charge, made so often to damage the royal reputation. Rockingham's annoyance can be appreciated: under most trying conditions he had done his best to serve the King and the realm, and the dismissal was unexpected though not unwished for. But his annoyance was directed against Pitt rather than the King.

No' finer tribute could have been paid to any Ministry than that which Edmund Burke penned about Rockingham's Administration.

They treated their sovereign with decency; with reverence. They discomfited, and, it is hoped, for ever abolished, the dangerous and unconstitutional practice of removing military officers for their votes in Parliament. They firmly adhered to those friends of

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liberty who had run all hazards in its cause, and provided for them in preference to every other claim. With the Earl of Bute they had no personal connexion, no correspondence of councils. They neither courted him nor persecuted him. They practised no corruption, nor were they even suspected of it. They sold no offices. They obtained no reversions of pensions, either coming in or going out, for themselves, their families, or their dependents. In the prosecution of their measures they were traversed by an opposition of a new and singular character; and opposition of placemen and pensioners. They were supported by the confidence of the nation. And having held their offices under many difficulties and discouragements, they left them at the express command, as they had accepted them at the earnest request, of their royal master.

It was perhaps George's misfortune that he never recognized the sterling qualities in Rockingham and many of his colleagues.

* * *

BUT HOWEVER MISGUIDED George's actions were, however contrary to constitutional practice, there is little doubt that his efforts to smash the party machine were dictated by a sincere and patriotic desire to serve his country well. The party machine as he saw it was harmful to the national interests: it was used by political factions for their own advantage. It gave them lucrative state employment and enriched their friends. George came to the throne with a very definite conception of kingship. First the Crown must be above party: second, it must take a dignified and active part in the business of government. But what did he find in 1760? Since the accession of his great-grandfather, George I, the Crown had been reduced to the ignominious position of a pawn in the hands of the Whigs, who used Crown patronage and State funds to strengthen their position in Parliament and destroy the power of their political opponents. Had not the Revolution Settlement of 1688, about which the Whigs talked so loudly, invested the sovereign with definite rights and duties? George III, however, found that these rights and duties were being slowly but surely usurped by the Whig politicians, who put an interpretation on the Revolution Settlement which was never intended by its framers. The inability of George I to speak English and the lukewarm interest taken in English politics by George II had resulted in the development of the Cabinet system of government under Sir Robert

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Walpole. As an instrument of sound government this was to become ideally suited to British needs; to George III there was not given the gift of prevision; and the fact that he mistrusted a system which sought to exclude the sovereign from active participation in the business of government in his own realm must not be laid too strenuously to his charge. The creators of the system of Cabinet government were almost certainly as ignorant of its immense political potentialities as George himself. With them it was nothing more than a useful weapon for preventing a foreign prince from sublimating British to Hanoverian interests and dabbling in the politics of a country whose people he did not understand.

Imbued with a high sense of duty and high ethical standards George III on coming to the throne could not have viewed his royal inheritance with enthusiasm. In the high places of Government were men whose profligate manner of life was offensive to the young King—noblemen whose interests were in the Ring or on the Turf, in the tap-room or the brothel. Their indifference to the claims of business, in George's eyes, was unforgivable. He himself lived an ordered life, rising early in the morning and working late into the night; and not unnaturally he expected his Ministers to do as he did. Their behaviour only served to emphasize their unfitness for the posts which they occupied. The striking down of political opponents left them unchallenged in the councils of the nation. Their bribery and corruption, done mainly with government funds, denied them the privilege of claiming to represent the people. The unhealthy stimulation of mob passions, used regularly to influence Ministers of the Crown and Members of Parliament, was a travesty of government.

Rightly or wrongly George came to regard the domination of the Whigs as a canker in the body politic which must be ruthlessly cut away. His lack of imagination robbed him of what idealism he possessed when he ascended the throne. The attempt to dispense with bribery and corruption in the first few months of his reign was a dismal failure; and in the struggle to end 'Mr Pitt's German War' he was compelled to play the Whigs at their own game. He played so well, and won so handsomely, that the Whigs could never forgive him for his victories. George both in his private and public life believed that grievous maladies called for drastic remedies; and he was

never afraid to try those remedies. The bringing in of Henry Fox to 'manipulate' Parliament when the Peace of Paris was under discussion was perhaps a bitter blow to an illusion; but the blow was softened when the King came to realize that Fox's discreditable methods were the means to an end—the establishment of a saner and healthier system of government wherein the Crown occupied an honourable and useful place. Experience early demonstrated to him that this end was only to be reached after a grim and distasteful struggle; but George had too much manliness about him to shirk the issues; and despite the many serious set-backs which he encountered, and the many insults which he suffered, he persevered to the end. New weapons had to be placed in his armoury—weapons which were as tarnished as those used by his opponents. But he entered upon the struggle with one marked advantage—by a cunning use of the patronage which belonged to the Crown the power of the Crown could be made irresistibly immense. Why should it not be used to cleanse the Augean stables of Whiggery, the stench from which pervaded and contaminated every walk of national life?

There were in the country men who shared George's views on the pressing need of a new conception of government. There were in the ranks of Whiggery men whose low standards of political honesty made them easily responsive to political jobbery. The former George admired; the latter he despised although he dare not say so: for the success of his plan it was necessary that both groups should be fused into a political party which would act wholly and loyally under his direction or under the direction of a politician whom he could trust implicitly. The members of this new party were known as 'the King's Friends.' Their work was first to destroy old party loyalties and then to create a system of government in which the best men in the realm, irrespective of party ties, participated.

* * *

PITT WAS WITH the King at Richmond for about three hours on July 12th, 1766. Together they discussed the political situation. The King placed himself in Pitt's hands without reservation: he readily agreed that messengers should be sent to Stow to summon Temple to take part in the deliberations. Temple came, but he refused the Treasury when it was offered him. As a matter of

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fact he was out of patience with Pitt for the way in which he had gone against the Grenville interests in advocating the repeal of the Stamp Act. He was also afraid that he would be completely overshadowed by his brother-in-law in the new government. He put the latter point plainly to his sister, Lady Chatham, when he said in a letter to her that he would be 'stuck into a Ministry as a great cipher at the head of the Treasury, surrounded by other ciphers named by Mr Pitt.' It never entered his head that his refusal would end his political career: he had not the wit to see that all his past political successes had been achieved in the shadow of his brother-in-law's great popularity in the country.

On August 2nd the composition of the new Administration was formally announced.

First Lord of the Treasury: The Duke of Grafton.

Chancellor of the Exchequer: Mr Charles Townshend.

Lord President: The Earl of Northington.

Lord Chancellor: The Baron Camden.

Secretary of State: General Conway.

Secretary of State: The Earl of Shelburne.

First Lord of the Admiralty: Sir Charles Saunders.

Master-General of the Ordnance: The Marquis of Granby.

Secretary at War: The Viscount Barrington.

Paymaster: Lord North and Mr George Cooke.

Attorney-General: Mr William de Grey.

Solicitor-General: Mr Willes.

Lord Privy Seal: Mr WILLIAM PITT.

There was wild delight in the country when the news went out that Pitt was again at the helm. In London arrangements were made to illuminate the streets and to hold a banquet in the Guildhall in his honour. But on August 4th it was announced that the popular idol had accepted a peerage; and the very people who two days previously had hailed him as the saviour of his country now cursed him as the arch-traitor of the popular cause and a sycophantic hunter after tawdry honours. Orders were given to cancel the arrangements for the street illuminations and banquet. Public opinion was unjust: but at the same time it has to be admitted that Pitt's removal to the House of Lords greatly weakened his position in the country.

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The blow [wrote Horace Walpole] was more ruinous to his country than himself. While he held the love of the people nothing was so formidable in Europe as his name. The talons of the lion were drawn, when he was no longer awful in his own forest.

It is doubtful whether Pitt in his role of 'Great Commoner' could have kept his Ministry long together. It lacked ability and political cohesion: its prestige depended entirely upon the respect which the name of Pitt conjured up in the country—and that respect was greatly lessened when Pitt was transformed into Chatham. Burke's famous description of the new Ministry is as true as it is witty.

He [Chatham] made an Administration so chequered and speckled—he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a Cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic; such a tesselated pavement without cement, here a bit of black stone and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers; King's friends and Republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies—that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on.

In forming the Ministry Pitt had broken party ties: it was an experiment which George dearly wished to try and which he believed would work to the advantage of his people.

The new Ministry was quickly riding rough waters. A bad harvest compelled Chatham to forbid by an Order in Council the export of corn. His action was challenged at the opening of the parliamentary session in the Autumn. He was charged with having advised the King to exercise an authority which overrode the law: it was inferred that he had done what too many people believed the King always meant to do—ignored the authority of Parliament. Chatham's reply, however, was unanswerable: the situation was desperate and could not wait for the meeting of Parliament; and in these circumstances he had acted—as he would always act—in the public good. Much was made of this trivial matter by the members of the factions controlled by Bedford and Grenville; and it was at once made clear that they were resolved to give the new Ministry no quarter. The Ministers, on the other hand, could claim the support of their own followers and of 'the King's Friends.'

Chatham was a sick man: his ill-health made him peevish and

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testy, with the result that his treatment of some of his colleagues was arrogant and arbitrary. Before the end of the year [1766] there were defections from the Ministry, the most serious of which was the resignation of Sir Charles Saunders, the First Lord of the Admiralty. Chatham believed that his own position would be strengthened by introductions from the 'Bloomsbury Gang,' who were the followers of Bedford; but the Duke's demands were so extravagant that the King rightly refused to entertain them for a moment. He had no liking for Bedford after the Duke's insolence in 1765. Saunders' place was given to Sir Edward [later Lord] Hawke, the victor of Quiberon Bay.

As soon as Parliament broke up for the Christmas recess Chatham hastened westwards to Bath, hoping that the waters would rid his system of the 'cursed gout' which racked his body and tried his temper so terribly. But he did not respond to the 'cure'; and when Parliament reassembled on January 16th, 1767, the Ministry found itself without a leader. Chatham lay behind closed doors in the *Castle Inn* at Marlborough: no one could approach him, and he would issue no instructions on the conduct of business. His eccentricities drove his devoted wife to distraction and filled his servants with a morbid fear. Grafton who assumed the leadership of the Ministry in his chief's absence vainly asked for instructions. He even volunteered to go to Marlborough to talk matters over with Chatham. But it was always the same reply which he received: the Earl was far too ill to 'enter into discussions of business.'

Chatham's absence from the council table was the signal for the commencement of intrigue within the Cabinet. Grafton's assumption of leadership was resented by Charles Townshend, who adroitly tried to manœuvre himself into the leading place in the hope that he would retain it when Chatham retired. The King, aware of these divisions, was profoundly troubled. It was clear that the Ministry was breaking up. At the end of February the Government had been defeated in the Commons on the Land Tax. Already hints were being thrown out to the effect that a new Prime Minister ought to be found. But where was he to come from? In the opinion of many there was only one candidate for the office—George Grenville. George frankly confessed that he would sooner admit the Devil into his Closet—

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nay resign his Crown—than bear with Grenville again. Referring to the Government's recent defeat in the Commons he said :

As for losing questions in Parliament it did not intimidate him. He would stand his ground, and be the last to yield, although he stood single.

He was overjoyed when he learnt on March 2nd that Chatham had returned to his house at North End, Hampstead. On the following day he sent the Earl a letter, between the lines of which it is possible to detect the fear that Chatham would be compelled to desert him through ill-health.

LORD CHATHAM—I received with great pleasure on returning from the Play last Night the account of Your arrival, & Am anxious to know how You continue ; during Your severe confinement I have laid great share of its duration to the Uneasiness You have felt from considering how necessary Your presence was for my Service & that of the Public ; I do not think it fair to detain you longer, but can not conclude without expressing my reliance that Your firmness will be encouraged with redoubled ardour to withstand that coil called connection, after the extraordinary event of Friday ; as to myself I owe It has that effect on me.

Chatham's reply, fulsome though it was, can hardly have reassured the harassed King. It contained the ominous sentence :

He is most unhappy still to Continue out of a Condition to attend his Majesty's Most Gracious Presence.

Four days later another letter was despatched to the stricken Earl, who had now removed to his house in Bond Street—a sign that his health was improving.

Now You are arrived in Town [said the King] every difficulty will daily decrease & tho I confess that I do not think I have met with that treatment I had reason to expect from many individuals now strangely united in opposition, without any more honourable reasons than because they are out of place, yet I can never believe but the Majority of the Nation must feel themselves interested to wish supporting my measures while my Ministers steadily assist Me in pursuing such, as are calculated solely for the benefit of my Dominions.

The King concluded with the hope that the Earl would not venture out until he was well enough to do so 'with safety.'

But gout and melancholia had Chatham firmly in their evil grip. He lay in his house in Bond Street a broken man, cursing his infirmities and taking little interest in public affairs. Now and then he, or Lady Chatham at his request, would write to inform the King of his ‘zeal and attachment’ to the royal service; but Grafton was allowed to muddle through as best he could without either encouragement or advice; and nothing was done to check the reckless progress of Townshend, whose ambition and genius were directed towards the disruption of the Cabinet. The King showed the utmost consideration towards the sick Earl, refraining from worrying him with details of business and keeping in constant touch with his doctor, Dr Addison. On April 30th, however, he wrote to advise Chatham

the moment this very unfavourable wind changes, to remove for a few days to North-end, to resume the riding on horseback.

George had a remedy for most ailments: he was certain that his advice would ‘enable’ the Earl ‘to come out in perfect health.’ Unfortunately the removal to Hampstead was followed by a relapse. The King was in a torment of anxiety. At last he wrote asking Chatham to receive him in his sick room, at the same time promising that he ‘would not talk business’; but the visit would let ‘the world know that he had attended him.’ For gossips were already insinuating that the Earl’s illness was a cloak for a disagreement between the King and his Prime Minister. By the end of May matters had become desperate: internal dissensions in the Cabinet so disgusted Grafton that he threatened to resign. On May 31st, therefore, the King penned a pathetic letter to his Prime Minister.

Richmond Lodge.

LORD CHATHAM—No one has more cautiously avoided writing to You than myself during Your late indisposition, but the moment is so extremely critical that I cannot possibly delay it any longer; by the letter You received Yesterday from the D. of Grafton You must see the anxiety he and the President at present labour under, the Chancellor is very much in the same situation, this is equally owing to the Majority in the House of Lords amounting on the Friday only to Six & on the Tuesday to three tho I made two of my Brothers vote both those days, & to the great coldness shewn those three Ministers by Lord Shelburne; whom they as well as myself

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imagine to be rather a Secret Enemy, the avowed Enmity of Mr Townshend & the resolution of Lt G. Conway to retire, tho without any view of entering into Opposition; my firmness is not dismaded [sic] by these unpleasant appearances for from the Hour You entered Office I have uniformly relied on Your firmness to act in defiance of that faction, wh. has never appeared to the height it now does till within these few Weeks; Tho Your Relations [*i.e.* the Grenvilles], the Bedfords & Rockinghams are joined with an intention to storm my Closet, yet if I was mean enough to submit, they owne they would not join in forming an Administration, therefore nothing but confusion could be obtained; I am strongly of opinion with the answer You sent the D. of Grafton, but by a Note I have received from him I fear I cannot keep him above a day unless You see him & encourage him; Your Duty and affection for my Person, Your own honour call on You to make an effort, if You converse with him but five minutes I believe it would raise his Spirits; mine I thank Heaven want no rousing, my love to my Country as well as what I owe to my own Character & to my family prompt me not to yield to faction; be firm and you will find me amply ready to take as active a part as the hour seems to require, tho none of my Ministry stand by me I cannot truckle. . . .

It was an appeal which Chatham could not refuse. He saw Grafton. The sight of the Earl's helplessness and the knowledge that resignation would only add to his burdens persuaded the Duke to carry on. Wrote Grafton after that memorable visit to the sick room at North End:

His [Chatham's] nerves and spirits were affected to a dreadful degree, and the sight of his great mind, bowed down and thus weakened by disorder, would have filled me with grief and concern, even if I had not long borne a sincere attachment to his person and character. The confidence he reposed in me demanded every return on my part, and it appeared like a cruelty in me to have been urged by any necessity to put a man I valued to so great suffering.

No one appreciated the sacrifice which Chatham had made in seeing Grafton more than the King himself. On June 2nd he wrote to the Earl:

LORD CHATHAM—My sole purpose in writing, is the desire of knowing whether the anxiety & hurry of the last Week has not affected Your health; I should have sent Yesterday had I not

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thought a day of rest necessary previous to Your being able to give an answer; if You have not suffered which I flatter myself I think with reason I can congratulate You on its being a good proof you are gaining Ground.

Again the King's hopes of recovery were dashed to the ground. Chatham's illness kept him away from business all the summer: in September he removed to his place at Burton Pynsent in Somersetshire; but before the end of the year he was back again at Hayes, still trying to regain health and strength.

Grafton had not the personality to dominate a Cabinet which had a Townshend in it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was a law unto himself. In defiance of the known wishes of his colleagues [and certainly without the knowledge of Chatham] he brought in a measure to tax the American colonists. He was openly intriguing to create an Administration of which he would be the head. But on September 4th death cut him down in the prime of life: it was a loss to the House of Commons who delighted to hear his wit, a gain to the Ministry in which he had implanted the seeds of disruption. Lord North took Townshend's place; and Thomas Townshend came into the office of Paymaster. Towards the end of the year [1767] another ministerial re-shuffle was necessary owing to the resignations of Northington and Conway. The Earl Gower had the former's place as Lord President of the Council; and the Viscount Weymouth succeeded Conway as Secretary of State for the Southern Department: at the same time the Earl of Hillsborough was brought in to fill a newly created office—the Secretary of State for the American Colonies. None of the new-comers brought lustre or weight to the Ministry.

* * *

THEN LIKE A bolt from the blue Wilkes again strutted across the political scene. The fair Corradini quickly bade him farewell when she found that his funds were running low. Foreign creditors were arming themselves with writs and making life extremely uncomfortable and precarious for the exiled demagogue. The only safety lay in a return to his native land, hopeful that the past would be forgotten and that his future might be undisturbed. Twice during his exile Wilkes had pleaded with old-time friends to quash the sentences passed upon him—to Rockingham

who generously sent him funds while he remained overseas, and to Grafton who had so splendidly stood by him when he was arraigned for his authorship of Number XLV of *The North Briton*. Both appeals, however, were ignored.

Early in February 1768 Wilkes appeared in London. He wrote to the Solicitor to the Treasury to inform him that 'on his honour as a gentleman' he would appear in the Court of the King's Bench on the first day of the next term to receive the punishment which the law had meted out to him. He also wrote to the King, begging for a pardon and permission to be allowed to live in his native land unmolested. That letter was addressed personally to George: it was taken by one of Wilkes's servants to Buckingham House. When no answer was forthcoming Wilkes's friends accused the King of being bound by stupid conventions, assuming that his silence was due to the fact that the approach had not been made through the 'proper channels.' The accusation is ludicrous. George never stood on ceremony with any of his subjects: he ignored Wilkes's letter for the simple, and very good, reason that he regarded the writer as a filthy blasphemer and cowardly libeller who deserved the consequences of his behaviour. To have pardoned Wilkes would doubtless have converted an enemy into a friend; but in doing so George would have acted against his own conscience, and would have 'truckled' to a demagogue. And, to the end of his life, he hated all demagogues.

Rebuffed by the King, hurt to find that his popularity had waned during exile, resolved to restore his fallen fortunes, there remained for Wilkes only one course to follow—to force his enemies to persecute him in a way that would revive the old cry of 'Wilkes and Liberty.' The country was in the throes of a General Election. Wilkes, to every one's amazement, secured nomination as one of the candidates in the City of London. He was not elected, but he polled a considerable number of votes, and when the result was announced his reception at the hands of the mob completely overshadowed in enthusiasm that accorded to the elected member. The next move was a bolder one: supported by the Duke of Portland and Temple he was nominated as a candidate for Middlesex, and prominent among his supporters was John Horne [he later added the name of Tooke], a disreputable though brilliant person, who had been the incumbent

of a chapel-of-ease in Brentford, where the election was being held. It is impossible not to believe that a deliberate attempt was made to influence the course of the election : on March 28th, the day on which polling was due to commence, a rowdy mob marched from London to Brentford. Barrington at the War Office at once wrote to the King to inform him what steps he had taken to preserve order in the capital when the mob returned in the evening. His prudence won the approbation of the King, who replied to the effect that he would not stir from home so that he could be available in the event of any emergency.

But the situation was quickly out of control. Angry crowds thronged before the royal palaces and besieged the homes of the Government's supporters. People passing in the streets were subjected to injury and insult ; and much damage was done to property. An inefficient constabulary could never hope to cope with such an ugly situation : the Government not unnaturally hesitated to use the military. Weymouth was tireless in his efforts to restore order : he wrote to the magistrates urging them to deal firmly with all disturbers of the public peace, and he had detachments of troops brought into the capital to meet emergencies. George himself longed for an opportunity to disperse the mob 'at the head of the Guards.' He recognized that it was time strong action was taken to crush the forces of disorder which made London one of the unsafest cities in Western Europe. He was well aware that the affair of Wilkes was merely another excuse for the lawless elements to pursue their mischievous designs.

We have independent mobs that have nothing to do with Wilkes, and who only take advantage of so favourable a season. The dearness of provisions incites—the hope of increase of wages allures—and drink put them in motion. The coalheavers began ; and it is well it is not a hard frost, for they have stopped all coals coming to town. The sawyers rose, too, and at last the sailors, who have committed great outrages in merchant ships and prevented their sailing.

Thus wrote Horace Walpole to a friend.

The news that Wilkes had been returned for Middlesex served to intensify the popular excitement. London went mad when he returned from Brentford : the streets were illuminated, and crowds gathered to shout 'Wilkes and Liberty' and do a great

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deal of mischief. On April 20th Wilkes surrendered himself to the Court of the King's Bench; but on a legal quibble his case was not proceeded with that day. A new warrant had therefore to be prepared; but when it was ready the Sheriffs' Officers were reluctant to execute it. That angered the King. In a letter to Weymouth he said :

I cannot conclude without expressing my sorrow that so mean a set of men as the Sheriffs' Officers can, either from timidity or interestedness, frustrate a due exertion of the law. If he [Wilkes] is not soon secured, I wish you would inquire whether there is no legal method of quickening the zeal of the Sheriffs themselves.

On the same day [April 25th] he put North in possession of a confidence.

Though entirely confiding in your attachment to my person, as well as in your hatred of every lawless proceeding, yet I think it highly proper to apprise you that the expulsion of Mr Wilkes appears to be very essential, and must be effected.

George had already made up his mind that Wilkes should not sit in the House of Commons as the representative of the electors of Middlesex.

Wilkes was eventually arrested—but not without violence—on April 27th: he was promptly committed to prison to await his trial. The King at once penned a note to Weymouth, urging him to keep 'a very careful eye . . . on the King's Bench Prison,' where Wilkes was incarcerated. Three days later, when informed that the prison was constantly besieged by angry crowds, he wrote to Weymouth suggesting that the Attorney-General might consider the advisability of asking the Court to commit Wilkes to the 'Tower, where the like illegal concourse will be effectually prevented, without harassing the troops.' He had accepted Wilkes's challenge and was determined to fight to the bitter end. In the same letter George said to Weymouth :

If a due firmness is shewn with regard to this audacious criminal, this affair will prove a fortunate one, by restoring a due obedience to the laws. But if this is not the case I fear anarchy will continue till what every temperate man must dread, I mean an effusion of blood, has vanquished.

Those are the words of a realist.

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The new Parliament was due to meet on May 10th. The Government knew that there would be trouble once the mob learnt that Wilkes was not to be allowed to take his seat, and consequently detachments of military were posted about Westminster. Their fears were realized. On the non-appearance of Wilkes a great crowd rushed to the King's Bench Prison, and demanded the release of the prisoner. An effort was made to quieten them by peaceful methods; but when it failed the Riot Act was read, and the soldiers fired. Six people—among them a woman—were killed, and a number were wounded.

The incident produced a tremendous stir in the country. Every excuse was made for the behaviour of the mob: the wildest charges were levelled against the Government, Weymouth in particular being accused of having deliberately planned the murder of his fellow-countrymen! The spirit which had produced 'the horrid massacres' of St George's Fields was the same as that which victimized the patriot Wilkes. It was the spirit of a despotism; and many found it impossible to believe that the King had not created it for his own ends. In June Wilkes' case was argued in the Courts. The former verdicts were confirmed: as the publisher of Number XLV of *The North Briton* he was sentenced to twelve months imprisonment and fined £500; and as publisher of *The Essay on Woman* he was sentenced to a further twelve months and fined another £500.

No sooner was he put behind the prison bars than he launched another attack upon the Government. By some means or other he had secured a copy of a letter which Weymouth had sent to the Chairman of the Surrey Quarter Sessions, in which he informed the magistrates that they could have the services of the military in preserving order. In view of the disturbed state of the country it was a most proper letter to send; but when Wilkes published it in *The St James's Chronicle*—and commented upon it in the strongest language—it immediately gave colour to the rumour that the Government had planned the affair of St George's Fields.

To ignore the letter which Wilkes sent to *The St James's Chronicle* might have been the wisest course to pursue had Wilkes been susceptible to the lash of ostracism; but Weymouth and his friends were not particularly wise, and their enemies were not particularly generously disposed. The King, as has been seen,

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was eager for Wilkes's expulsion from the House of Commons. So the attack was met: Weymouth from his place in the Lords stigmatized Wilkes's remarks as a breach of privilege; and his friends in the Commons secured a ruling that Wilkes once again had been guilty of an 'insolent, scurrilous and malicious libel,' and must answer for his conduct at the Bar of the House. On February 2nd, 1769, he was brought from prison to Westminster; and in the face of his accusers his insolence equalled his courage. He was ashamed of nothing he had written: he would repeat his words again if need arose. Hurling a fine defiance at the House he said:

Whenever a Secretary of State shall dare to write so bloody a scroll, I will through life dare to write such prefatory remarks, as well as to make my appeal to the nation on the occasion.

The speeches of his friends could not save him from the fate which was reserved for him: on the following day by a majority of 82 votes Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons.

The King was delighted with the turn of events in the Commons. On the same day that Wilkes was expelled from the House he wrote to North:

Nothing could be more honourable for Government than the conclusion of the Debate this Morning and promises a very proper end of this irksome affair this Day; I cannot help at the same time expressing some surprise at the very inconsistent part of some of those who opposed on this Debate who had supported the day before.

George Grenville's championship of Wilkes was certainly a matter for surprise in view of the part which he had played in the early attack on the demagogue.

Wilkes was not to be so easily disposed of. The Middlesex electors resented the arbitrary interference with their choice of member; and in the new election which was ordered they re-elected Wilkes by an overwhelming majority. The Commons retaliated with a resolution to the effect that the Member for Middlesex was ineligible to sit in their House, and ordered a fresh election. The electors refused to be browbeaten, and Wilkes was nominated again. Who could the Government find

to oppose him? His previous opponent—one Dingley who was a Limehouse sawmills proprietor—was out of the question: not only had he only secured five votes at the last election, but he had been severely handled by the crowd and was disinclined to risk his neck again. Eventually a suitable candidate was forthcoming in Colonel Henry Luttrell, the son of the Earl of Carhampton and a popular officer in the Guards. Luttrell put up a plucky fight, but the odds were against him from the outset, and once again Middlesex by a handsome majority elected Wilkes as its Member of Parliament. What Burke described as ‘the fifth act of this tragi-comedy’ ended with the Commons declaring Luttrell the lawfully elected Member for Middlesex, since Wilkes had been declared incapable of sitting in Parliament.

The Government had put itself into an unenviable position. A sacred principle of the Constitution had been ruthlessly violated: a cheap demagogue had been invested with all the glories of martyrdom and cast in the role of a champion of popular liberties. To blame the Ministers for the line they had taken would perhaps be unjust: no doubt they shared the King’s frequently expressed view—‘that if firmness be now shewn this affair will vanish into smoke, but if this is omitted no one can say to what lengths Faction may not go.’ But it would have been wiser had they ignored Wilkes—even had they allowed him to take his seat in Parliament. Horace Walpole took that view in a letter which he wrote to his friend, Sir Horace Mann, soon after Wilkes returned to England.

In my opinion [he said] the House of Commons is the place where he [Wilkes] can do the least hurt, for he is a wretched speaker, and will sink to contempt, like Admiral Vernon, who I remember just such an illuminated hero, with two birthdays in one year.

The only consolation which the King and his Ministers could have from the sorry business was that despite the forces marshalled against them they had gained their way, and had not truckled to ‘Faction.’

It is not difficult to imagine the King’s anxiety during the struggle with Wilkes. He was aware that with the exception of Weymouth and Barrington the Ministers had little heart in the business—and in such a mood there was always the danger

that the excesses of Wilkes's supporters would invite surrender. He was tormented by that dread of weakness which always troubled him: Wilkes, in his opinion, was the embodiment of Faction; and he was resolved that Faction must be beaten to its knees. The royal views were known outside the palace; and that brought down upon him all the abusive fury of the mob. But George had a king's courage: he was never afraid of his life. This is proved by his behaviour on March 22nd, 1769, when an impudent attack was delivered against St James's Palace. It originated in a street riot. Eight hundred City merchants drove in procession to the palace to deliver an Address to the King, expressing their loyalty to his person and confidence in his government. At Temple Bar they were met by an angry crowd which, made aware of their business, defiantly stood across their path. A circuitous route was thereupon taken; but the crowd followed the merchants, and a running battle resulted. It was a very bedraggled procession which arrived at St James's: it was a very dangerous mob which hung upon its heels. The Guards were called out, and managed to preserve some sort of order. But they could not prevent the wild shouts of the mob — 'God Save Great Wilkes Our King' — which echoed through the streets around the palace. Nor could they prevent some daring young 'bloods' [they were certainly so-called gentlemen] from bringing a hearse, drawn by four black and white horses [and decorated with the most offensive emblems, including pictures of the recent 'massacres' in St George's Fields and having on the roof a figure garbed as an executioner], to the palace gates. They tried to force it into the courtyard; but the Steward, Lord Talbot, a man of great physical strength and no mean exponent of the 'gentle art,' hurled himself at the head of the Household servants against the intruders, and forced them back. The reading of the Riot Act, however, brought the mob to its senses, and hounded by police and soldiery it dispersed helter-skelter down the surrounding streets.

Not for a moment did George lose his head during this ugly situation. Lord Holland related:

A Lord who was with him told me that after the great riot at St James's, or rather in the midst of it, one could not find out, either in his countenance or his conversation, that everything was not as quiet as usual.

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One cannot help thinking that eccentric old Samuel Johnston took a truer measure of his King's character than many of his contemporaries. After an audience in February 1767 Johnston remarked :

Sir, they may talk of the King as they will, but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen.

It could not be said that Johnston was unacquainted with the other 'gentlemen' of his days.

* * *

CHATHAM'S PROTRACTED ILLNESS forced him into the position of a figure-head in a Ministry, many of the members of which were not in agreement with his views. In January 1768 he again threw out a hint that it was time for him to resign: again he was urged by the King to stand by him.

I am thoroughly convinced [said George] of the utility you are to my service; for though confined to your house, your name has been sufficient to enable my Administration to proceed. I therefore in the most earnest manner call on you to continue your Administration.

Chatham yielded to the royal wishes. But it was soon made clear to him—for rumours constantly invaded the sick-room—that there must sooner or later come a parting of the ways. The gulf between him and his ministerial colleagues was widening. For Wilkes's pornographic activities he had no use, but he feared that the Ministry's persecution of the demagogue was developing into a dangerous attack on constitutional liberties. He thought, too, that his friends were not being fairly treated. A very old and dear friend, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, had been removed from the office of Governor of Virginia: another friend, Shelburne, was obviously being elbowed out of the Cabinet. On October 12th, therefore, Chatham made his great decision. In a letter to Grafton he pleaded that ill-health made it impossible for him any longer to continue in office, and he requested the Duke to acquaint the King of his decision. George still believed that personal persuasion might cause Chatham to change his mind again. On October 14th the King sent the following letter to the Earl :

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Queens House Oct^r 14th 1768.

LORD CHATHAM—The Duke of Grafton communicated to Me Yesterday Your desire of Resigning the Privy Seal on account of the continuation of Your ill State of Health; as You entered upon that Employment in August 1766. at my own Requisition I think I have a right to insist on Your remaining in my Service; for I with pleasure look forward to the time of, Your recovery when I may have Your assistance in resisting the torrent of Factions this Country so much labours under, this thought is the more frequent in my mind as the Lord Chancellor & the Duke of Grafton take every opportunity to declare warmly to Me their desire of seeing that. Therefore I again repeat it You must not think of retiring but of doing that that may be most conducive to Your health, & to seeing You take a public Share in my Affairs.

With his customary effusiveness Chatham replied to the effect that he must resign.

Hayes Octob^r y^e 14th 1768.

SIR—Penetrated with the high honour of Your Majesty's gracious Commands, my Affliction is infinite to be constrained by absolute necessity from Illness, to lay myself again at your Majesty's feet for compassion. my Health is so broken, that I feel all Chance of recovery will be entirely procluded by my continuing to hold the Privy Seal, totally disabled, as I still am from assisting in your Majesty's Councils. Under this load of this unhappiness, I will not despair of your Majesty's pardon, while I again supplicate on my knees your Majesty's Mercy, and most humbly implore your Majesty's Royal permission to resign that high office.

Shou'd it please God to restore me to Health, every Moment of my life will be at your Majesty's devotion, in the mean time, the most gracious thought your Majesty deigns to express of my recovery is my best Consolation.

I am, Sir, With all Submission and profound Veneration Your Majesty's Most Dutifull and Devoted Servant

CHATHAM.

So Chatham, whose value as a buttress of the Administration even the King had overestimated, went. His place as Prime Minister was very rightly given to Grafton, upon whom for such a long time had devolved the arduous duty of keeping the Ministry together. Shelburne, a none too loyal colleague, resigned from the Southern Department of State, and was

succeeded by Weymouth, the Secretary of State for the Northern Department. Weymouth's place was filled by the Earl of Rochford; and the Earl of Bristol, one of Chatham's personal friends, was entrusted with the Privy Seal.

* * *

FEW MEN HAVE been more widely and virulently abused in their day than Grafton. His love of sport and dalliance with Nancy Parsons provided his many enemies with admirable targets for calumny and scorn. 'Junius,' that mysterious political letter-writer who waged a ceaseless war of words on Grafton and his friends, castigated the Duke as 'libertine,' 'hypocrite,' 'bloody tyrant,' and 'faithless friend.' He epitomized his hatred and contempt for the Duke in an unforgettable sentence :

Thou worse than one of the Brunswicks and all the Stuarts!

Grafton's influence and reputation in the country suffered severely from the attacks of the unknown 'Junius.' But nothing did him more harm than the abuse which was poured out upon him on account of his treatment of Wilkes. Grafton had been among Wilkes's staunchest friends in the days of the Grenville Administration : he had been one of those who urged Wilkes to continue his resistance to the Government. But now that he had come into power he had complacently forgotten all the claims of friendship—and had even gone to the limit of persecuting Wilkes for the very behaviour which he had once applauded. When in his capacity as Prime Minister it fell to Grafton's lot to advise the King to exercise the royal prerogative of mercy in favour of a poor wretch convicted of murder, 'Junius' in an open letter in *The Public Advertiser* launched against the Duke one of his deadliest shafts.

Have you quite forgotten that this man [Wilkes] was your Grace's friend? Or is it to murderers only that you will extend the mercy of the Crown?

A false friend is always an object of execration. Grafton would have been less than human had he not writhed uncomfortably under the attacks of 'Junius'; but, when it is remembered that public employment was distasteful to him, it is to his credit that he took his punishment like a man, and did not desert the

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ministerial ship at a time when it was sailing perilously near the rocks.

But there eventually was delivered against Grafton an attack which he could not withstand. Almost as dramatic as Wilkes's return from exile was Chatham's reappearance on the political scene. Early in July 1770 the Earl attended a Royal Levee quite unexpectedly. The King was overjoyed to see him, and affectionately congratulated him on his restoration to good health : and when the formalities of the Levee were over they adjourned to a private room where they talked for a considerable time. What actually transpired during that conversation is not known ; but there is little doubt that the King invited the Earl to resume his place in the Administration. Whether Chatham then told George that he meant to oppose the Government or left the royal presence without disclosing his future plans is also a matter for speculation. But Grafton, if he had any wit about him, must have known that his old chief was out to make mischief. When they came face to face in the ante-room of the palace immediately before the Levee of July 7th the Earl received the Duke's congratulations on his recovery 'with cold politeness.'

It was not long, however, before Chatham's intentions were known at Court. They had heard that he had been reconciled to his brothers-in-law—Temple and Grenville ; and that he had effected an alliance of 'the Grenville Connection' with Rockingham's party. It was obvious that assailed by so formidable an opposition the Government would be put to a severe test in Parliament. George was admittedly disappointed, but he was not discouraged. As soon as the threatened attack was launched it must be fairly and resolutely met. On January 7th, 1770—two days before the reassembling of Parliament—he wrote to North :

I am so desirous that every man in my service that can with propriety take part in the Debate on Tuesday, should speak, that I desire you will very strongly press Sir Gilbert Elliott and any others that have not taken in the last Session so forward a part as their abilities make them capable of, and I have no objection to Your adding that I have particularly directed You to speak to them on this occasion.

In the Debate on the Address Chatham treated the Lords to one of his most impassioned displays of oratory. The Government

had no constructive foreign policy: with the prospect of war never far away his country was isolated in Europe. Nor was more encouragement to be had from the Government's domestic policy. The country was seething with unrest: that unrest was due to nothing less than the attack on Wilkes. The rights of the freeholders in Middlesex had been arbitrarily violated; and what had been done in one county could be done in another with impunity. In short the Government had aimed a blow at the Constitution.

The Government's reply was the obvious one: the House of Commons had a constitutional right to decide in all matters affecting elections. Wilkes for a gross libel on a Minister of the Crown had been expelled from the House: more than that the Commons had resolved that he was ineligible for membership of their assembly. Chatham returned to the charge. The House of Commons must be saved from itself: the members had flagrantly usurped authority to which they had no right under the Constitution.

A breach had been made in the Constitution—the battlements are dismantled—the walls totter—the Constitution is not tenable. What remains then for us but to stand foremost in the breach; to repair or to perish in it?

It was the language which Chatham had used so often to cow the Commons to obedience to his imperious will.

Then followed an ugly piece of political treachery. Rising from the Woolsack Camden denounced his colleagues in the Ministry for their 'conspiracy' against the liberties of their country! In the course of his speech he said:

I accepted the Great Seal at first without conditions. I meant not therefore to be trammelled by his Majesty—I beg pardon, by his Ministers. But I have suffered myself to be so too long. For some time I have beheld with silent indignation the arbitrary measures which they were pursuing. I have often drooped and held my head in council, and disapproved by my looks those steps which I knew my avowed opposition could not prevent. I will, however, do so no longer, but will openly and boldly speak my sentiments.

A great lawyer was Camden; but his retention of office in the circumstances which he related to the Lords reflects little credit

on his political honesty. Like so many other people in January 1770 he thought that the Ministry was on its last legs. Can it be that he hoped to escape from the consequences of defeat and thereby ensure future employment? His studied allusion to the King's domination of the Cabinet had the effect which it was doubtless meant to have—to give substance to the persistent rumour that a despotism was being aimed at. If that rumour was true how came it about that Camden found it possible to remain so long in office? To turn 'King's Evidence' in politics might restore him to the bosom of his friends, but it can hardly enhance his reputation with posterity, or substantiate the claim that he was a disinterested politician with the welfare of his country at heart.

The attack in the Lords shook the Government badly. The first problem was to find a successor to the dismissed Chancellor. It was not an easy one to solve. The Opposition in the Lords, through the mouth of Shelburne, challenged any man of honour to accept the Great Seal under such humiliating conditions. Grafton had in his mind a very suitable candidate for the Woolsack—Charles Yorke, the Attorney-General and the son of the late Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. Grafton's offer of the Great Seal put Yorke in a quandary: the honour of the Woolsack attracted him, but he knew that acceptance would inevitably lose him many friendships—particularly among Rockingham's party, and with great reluctance, therefore, he declined Grafton's offer. The King thereupon took a hand in the business: in a personal talk he overcame Yorke's scruples, and on January 18th, 1770, the new Lord Chancellor was duly sworn at a meeting of the Privy Council. Two days later the political world was staggered by the news that Charles Yorke was dead—as it was everywhere whispered—by his own hand.

Yorke's death was a terrible blow for the King and Grafton: it was a circumstance of which their enemies made the fullest and basest use. Charles Yorke had died rather than dishonour his name by accepting the Great Seal: the King and Grafton had contributed to that death. Such were the innuendoes made in Opposition circles. Poor Grafton was completely overwhelmed. Already he had been compelled to accept the resignation of Granby from the office of Master-General of the Ordnance: he had witnessed significant withdrawals from the Royal House-

hold: the attack on his Administration in the Lords had been repeated with equal force and fury in the Commons: the sinister libels of 'Junius' were continued unceasingly. Weymouth tried to 'infuse some firmness and manliness' into the Duke; but to no purpose; and on January 28th he sent in his resignation. Both the King and the Opposition cursed him for a coward: he had manoeuvred the King into an untenable position, and then basely deserted him.

Grafton's resignation was hailed with delight by Chatham and his friends. They had broken the Administration: they had stormed the Closet: the King could no longer deny them the control of the Government. But they did not know the extent of George's courage and obstinacy. Having foreseen that Grafton would resign the King had laid his plans accordingly. One thing he was determined on: he would not risk a Dissolution by asking the Opposition leaders to form a Ministry.

Yes! I will have recourse to this [his sword], sooner than yield to a Dissolution.

Those words were spoken to Conway; and George meant all that was implied in them. By hook or by crook he would hold the shaken Ministry together and confound his factious opponents. To the general consternation of the Opposition on February 5th it was announced that North had become the First Lord of the Treasury.

The King Rules

*I*T WAS THE King's choice of Prime Minister which caused such a flutter in the political dove-cots. Frederick, Lord North, while not lacking political experience, had demonstrated few of the qualities essential for successful political leadership. Before he was twenty-two he entered Parliament as the Member for Banbury [1754]; and from 1759 to 1765 he held a minor office in the Treasury, secured for him through the influence of his powerful relative, Newcastle. When Chatham came into power in 1766 North received the lucrative post of Paymaster; and in the following year, on Townshend's untimely death, he was recommended by his chief for the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. If he lacked financial genius his Budgets were in the early years of his political career essentially sound, and won him even the praise of his political enemies. On April 11th, 1769, for example, Richard Rigby, Member for Tavistock, wrote to his political chief, Bedford:

Lord North opened his Budget in the Committee of Ways and Means; and in the four-and-twenty years that I have sat in Parliament, in very few of which I have missed that famous day of the Sessions, I verily think I have never known any of his predecessors acquit themselves so much to the satisfaction of the House.

Rigby endorsed his opinion a year later when he informed Bedford that North's Budget speech was done 'in a most masterly manner.'

More general was the recognition of North's ability as a scholar and skill as a wit. He had a profound knowledge of classical literature; and an extended Grand Tour gave him an intimate knowledge of the customs, manners and languages of the people

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of France, Italy and Germany. His wit was charming in every respect: it silenced his enemies without creating long-standing bitterness. He was the ideal public servant. Torrents of abuse could be poured upon him without ruffling his temper, and he was urbanely impervious to the criticism of opponents.

On Horace Walpole's authority we have it that North was not a beauty to look at.

Nothing could be more coarse, or clumsy, or ungracious, than his outside. Two large prominent eyes that rolled about to no purpose—for he was utterly short-sighted—a wide mouth, thick lips, and inflated visage, gave him the air of a blind trumpeter.

Nathaniel Dance's portrait of North now in the National Portrait Gallery suggests that Walpole's description does not depart far from the truth.

The King was clearly attracted by North's sterling qualities. His private life was unscathed by any indiscretion: his hatred of Faction was as deep as the King's: he shared the royal views on the interpretation of the 'Glorious Revolution.' The King was delighted at the way in which North attacked Wilkes during the debates which culminated in the expulsion of the Member for Middlesex from the House of Commons; and he came more and more to use him as the agent for transmitting his own ideas on government to the Cabinet. In the days which immediately followed Yorke's tragic death, when it was perfectly obvious to everyone at Court that Grafton might resign at any moment, the King took the decision to give Grafton's place to North. He previously discussed the matter with two of the most influential members of the Cabinet—Weymouth and Gower; and they both acquiesced in the royal plan. George had a private talk with North in the evening of January 22nd, when the offer of the premiership was formally made; and early next morning he confirmed the arrangement by letter.

After seeing you last night [wrote George], I saw Lord Weymouth, who by my direction, will wait on you with Lord Gower this morning to press you in the strongest manner to accept the office of First Commissioner of the Treasury; my own mind is more and more strengthened with the rightness of the measure that would prevent every other desertion. You must easily see that if you do not accept I have no peer at present in my service that

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I could consent to place in the Duke of Grafton's employment, Whatever you may think, do not take any decision, unless it is the one of instantly accepting, without a farther conversation with me. And as to the other arrangements, you may hear what others think but keep your own opinion till I have seen you.

The result of the appeal has already been indicated: North succeeded Grafton as Prime Minister. At the same time he retained the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

* * *

IT WAS ONE thing to make North Prime Minister but another to ensure that his Administration would weather the storm which had broken over the country as a result of Chatham's denunciation of the Government for its treatment of Wilkes. In both Houses of Parliament the question of Wilkes's incapacity to sit as the Member for Middlesex was hotly debated; but the Government managed to hold its own—though not by large majorities. The Opposition, disappointed at the failure which had attended their efforts in Parliament, thereupon adopted less honourable tactics. Agitators went up and down the country to urge electors to bombard the King with petitions begging him to dismiss the 'evil counsellors' who have 'traitorously' violated the 'spirit and letter of those laws which have secured the throne of these realms to the House of Brunswick.' The City of London, where the Wilkites were in the ascendancy, went to the extent of framing 'remonstrances' which likened the expulsion of Wilkes to 'a deed more ruinous in its consequences than the levying of ship-money by Charles the First, or the dispensing power assumed by James the Second.'

In April Wilkes was released from prison: he was at once honoured by the City of London by being elected an Alderman. On May 6th Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann:

I don't know whether Wilkes is subdued by his imprisonment, or waits for the rising of Parliament, to take the field; or whether his dignity of Alderman has dulled him into prudence, and the love of feasting; but hitherto he has done nothing but go to City banquets and sermons, and sit at Guildhall as a sober magistrate. . . . Lord Chatham has talked on the Middlesex election till nobody will answer him; and Mr Burke [Lord Rockingham's governor] has published a pamphlet [this was *Thoughts on the*

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Present Discontents] that has sown the utmost discord between that faction and the supporters of the Bill of Rights. Mrs Macaulay has written against it. In Parliament their numbers are shrunk to nothing, and the session is ending very triumphantly for the Court.

That North had not taken long to consolidate his position is clearly seen from a letter which Barrington, the Secretary for War, sent to his friend Sir Andrew Mitchell on April 24th :

- Though I can send you no very agreeable account of what is doing here, I can say with truth that in my opinion things are in many respects better than they were. Lord North bids fairer for making an able and good Minister than any man we have had a great while, Lord Chatham excepted, whose conduct this winter has cancelled many of the obligations this country owed him for his services in administration. I think that our heats are subsiding, and that men are coming to their senses.

When the parliamentary session terminated on May 19th North could look back on his first attempt at political leadership with a good deal of satisfaction. He had survived defeat on all measures of first-rate importance. He had allowed Wilkes's champions to talk as much as they liked, but had not truckled to them. He had persuaded Parliament to increase the Civil List by a sum of £100,000 a year and to pay the royal debts amounting to roughly £600,000. He had removed the duties [with the exception of those on tea] which Charles Townshend had put on imports into the North American colonies.

The debate on the increase of the Civil List and the payment of the King's debts had produced a good deal of angry talk from the benches of the Opposition. Why was the King in debt? He lived simply: he did not entertain lavishly—in fact he did not entertain at all: he had not spent any great sums on building works. And were the Government prepared to give the details of the debts? Opposition speakers hoped that North could be lured into a trap which would reveal something of the extent of the bribery and corruption alleged to have been practised by the Court.

But they were bitterly disappointed. Throughout North remained urbanely oblivious to the criticism of his opponents. Their sarcasm was silenced by witty pleasantries: their arguments by counter-arguments. North's tactful handling of the House

of Commons in those early months of his ministerial career not only enhanced his own political reputation but won him new friends and adherents; and as a result there were regular accessions of strength to the Government benches.

The little notice which was taken of the City's outpourings on the shortcomings of the Government so hurt the dignity of the Wilkites that they were driven to further efforts in order to make their voice heard. On May 23rd Lord Mayor Beckford [Horace Walpole called him 'that noisy vapouring fool'] carried another Remonstrance to St James's Palace. The King received him and his companions with dignity; and when Beckford had read out the contents of the Remonstrance the King made, so Richard Rigby averred, 'a very proper answer.' But it did not satisfy the Lord Mayor, who to the amazement of the onlookers treated the King to a violent harangue on the subject of his Ministers. Precisely what Beckford said is not known, for his speech was made *extempore*, and there was no one in the room to take it down. But, it is said, that in the plainest language he warned the King of the consequences of allowing anyone to alienate 'your Majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the City of London in particular'; and introduced the usual Whig sentiments about the violation of 'the Glorious and Necessary Revolution.'

George treated Beckford's extraordinary outburst with the contempt it deserved, but Chatham [and Horace Walpole maintained that the Earl had been responsible for the form of the Remonstrance!] made a tremendous fuss of the Lord Mayor, and treated him to one of his best efforts in effusive letter-writing:

Hayes May 25, 1770.

My dear Lord,

In the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks; and the overflowing of mine gives motion to a weak hand, to tell you how truly I respect and love the spirit which your lordship displayed on Wednesday. The *spirit of Old England* spoke, that never-to-be-forgotten day. If the heart of the Court be hardened, the feeling of the people will be more and more awakened by every repetition of unrelenting oppression on one part, and of determined and legal exertions on the other. But I forbear going into a dissertation where my mind is big only with admiration, thanks and affection.

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Adieu then, for the present [to call you by the most honourable of titles], *true Lord Mayor of London*; that is, *first magistrate of the first city of the world!* I mean to tell you only a plain truth, when I say, your lordship's mayoralty will be revered, till the Constitution is destroyed and forgotten. Believe me ever, with unalterable attachment, my dear Lord,

Your most faithful friend

and affectionate humble servant,

CHATHAM.

Three weeks later Beckford was dead. It was a piece of good fortune hardly expected by the Court.

It is often forgotten that the Whigs themselves were indirectly responsible for the rapid ascendancy of North's Administration over Parliament. The Whig Party was riven with dissensions and jealousies, which if they were not apparent to the eye were none the less destructive in effect. The very qualities which made Chatham an unrivalled war minister reduced him to the level of mediocrity as a peace-time politician. His name still commanded respect, but his utterances in the House of Lords had little of the magnetism of his speeches in the House of Commons. His haughty and imperious nature won him no real friends, but made him many enemies; and although he himself was not above coquetting with Faction he was nevertheless generally too impatient of the ways of factious politicians ever to be able—or even to want—to ingratiate himself with them. Since his resignation in 1768 he had worked with his two brothers-in-law, Temple and George Grenville, to embarrass the Government; but the connection was an unnatural one; and neither Temple nor Grenville could get away from the suspicion that their famous relative was endeavouring to entice their own followers into his camp. Much the same thing happened in Chatham's relations with Rockingham's party: the members were quite ready to vote with him on motions directed against the Government, but they were resolutely opposed to the suggestion of service under his leadership. Beckford's death in June was a severe blow for Chatham. The Lord Mayor wielded considerable influence in the City, and he had consistently supported 'the Great Commoner'—even after he had gone to the House of Lords. Granby's

death at Scarborough in October removed a friend whose reputation as the greatest living British soldier had definite political assets in relations with the officers of the Army. Then in November death carried away George Grenville, with the result that Temple withdrew almost entirely from politics, while many of Grenville's followers slowly made their way into the Government camp.

Thus North faced Parliament with much greater confidence when the session opened in November. Mourning for George Grenville kept Chatham and Temple out of their places in the Lords: Camden and Shelburne who thereupon became the spearhead of the Opposition's attack were poor substitutes for Chatham. The Rockingham party in the Commons could always be relied upon to put up a dignified resistance to North's policy, chiefly through the logical indictments of Burke and Dowdeswell; but this rhetorical superiority had little numerical value; and on every question of importance the Government could secure a comfortable majority.

The incapacity of Wilkes and the disturbances in the North American colonies were the hardy annuals of parliamentary business. Both produced wordy wars without shaking the position of the Government. The possibility of a war with Spain as a result of a dispute over the Falkland Islands loomed large in the parliamentary proceedings at the end of 1770; but North's handling of the situation prevented an open breach, and in January of the following year the Opposition had the mortification of witnessing the complete triumph of the Government's policy when the King of Spain disavowed the seizure of the islands, and ordered their immediate return to Great Britain. In these delicate negotiations, when the danger of war was never very far away, North was ably supported by the Chargé d'Affairs in Madrid—James Harris, who later became the Earl of Malmesbury.

Early in 1771 the whole question of the publication of parliamentary proceedings came up for discussion in the Commons. By a Standing Order of the House it was illegal to report the speeches of members; but the rule was generally evaded, and Opposition and Government journals vied with each other in the art of misrepresentation and abuse. On February 9th, however, Colonel George Onslow, the Member for Guildford, drew attention to reports which had appeared in *The Gazetteer* and

The Middlesex Journal, two notorious Opposition papers published by Thompson and Wheble respectively; and moved that since the reports violated the Standing Order the two publishers ought to be brought to the Bar of the House to receive punishment. The matter was hotly debated. On the other side it was argued truly enough that the reports complained of were not more scurrilous than those which appeared in Government papers; and some speakers even took the line that despite the existence of the Standing Order the electors had the right to know how their representatives spoke and voted in Parliament. They were ready to concede the point that misrepresentation ought to be punished, but such punishment ought to be meted out in the courts on the complaint of the person or persons concerned. Onslow's motion was duly carried; and Thompson and Wheble were ordered to appear at the Bar. They ignored the order; and on February 26th by an overwhelming majority [160 to 17] the House commanded the Serjeant-at-Arms to take them into custody. But the two publishers refused to admit the Serjeant-at-Arms, and the warrant was therefore not executed. On March 4th Onslow brought in a motion for an Address to the King begging him to issue a proclamation with a reward for the apprehension of Thompson and Wheble.

No sooner was the proclamation published than a certain Printer of the name of Carpenter seized Wheble and took him before Alderman Wilkes, who promptly discharged the arrested man, and bound Carpenter over to appear for trial on the charge of assault against Wheble. When Thompson was arrested and brought before Alderman Oliver a similar procedure was adopted. Wilkes immediately wrote to the Secretary of State to explain the action he had taken: he noted that Wheble was not charged with any crime in the proclamation, and then stated that his arrest by Carpenter not only violated 'the rights of an Englishman' but also 'the chartered liberties of the City.' The magistrates, however, supplied the persons who had effected the arrests with certificates so that they might claim the reward named in the proclamation!

Wilkes and Oliver had put the Government in a ludicrous position. It was perfectly clear that from start to finish the proceedings in the magistrates' courts had been skilfully planned. The man Carpenter turned out to be Wheble's 'devil'; and

the Government not unnaturally refused to pay the reward offered in the proclamation. Onslow, however, was not to be deterred by this piece of trickery. He named six other publishers as being guilty of violating the Standing Order; and successfully moved that they should appear at the Bar to receive punishment. Four obeyed the order; one was in prison and could not do so; and the sixth, Millar, refused to appear. Three of the four men who appeared in the House were dismissed with a reprimand: the case of the fourth was adjourned for further consideration. Onslow again moved that the House should order the arrest of Millar; and a messenger was sent to execute the warrant.

Once again the Opposition in the City had laid a cunning plan. Millar refused to go with the messenger, who thereupon tried to take him by force. A constable, posted near Millar's house for the purpose, came forward to arrest the messenger for assault; and carried him off to the Guildhall to appear before Wilkes. Wilkes would not deal with the case, and the constable then took his prisoner to the Mansion House to charge him before the Lord Mayor, Brass Crosby. Late in the evening the messenger was brought before Brass Crosby sitting in his court with Wilkes and Oliver. Millar's complaint was stated; and the Lord Mayor asked the messenger by what authority he dared to arrest the complainant. He replied that he was acting on the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons and showed his warrant. At that stage in the proceedings the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms made his appearance; and commanded the magistrates to hand into his custody both the messenger and Millar. This was refused; Millar was discharged; and the messenger was committed to take his trial on a charge of assault, bail eventually being allowed.

The House of Commons was very angry at the turn of events: its authority had been insolently defied. It was consequently moved that the Lord Mayor and the two Aldermen should appear at the Bar of the House. Brass Crosby and Oliver obeyed the order: Wilkes refused on the ground that he would not enter the House of Commons until he could do so as the Member for Middlesex. An attack of gout necessitated the withdrawal of the Lord Mayor before his case could be completed; but Alderman Oliver put up a spirited defence of his actions, and went so far as to glory 'in the fact laid to his charge.' His friends

in the House, led by Colonel Barré, put up a resolute defence in his behalf; and when the motion to commit him to the Tower came forward about thirty of them walked out of the chamber as a protest.

Brass Crosby's gout only kept him away from the House for two days. When he appeared he was as defiant as Alderman Oliver, and although the Commons were inclined to treat him more leniently by ordering him to be kept in custody by the Serjeant-at-Arms he claimed to be treated in the same way as his colleague and be committed to the Tower. No sooner did he make his appearance in the Palace Yard than the mob which had hung about Westminster all the day unharnessed the horses in his coach and drew him in procession to Temple Bar. There they ordered the Serjeant-at-Arms and his officers to get out of the coach; and proceeded to discuss the desirability of hanging them. Brass Crosby came to their rescue by assuring the crowd that they were his very good friends who were accompanying him back to the Mansion House. It was in the early hours of the morning before it was deemed safe enough to proceed to the Tower; and, if Horace Walpole is to be believed, Brass Crosby entered upon his imprisonment in a state of 'hilarious inebriety!'

There remained Wilkes to be dealt with. He was splendidly defiant: the House of Commons had forbidden him the right to put a foot inside Westminster; and he could not depart from their ruling by appearing at the Bar! At last it dawned upon the hotheads in the Commons who had fought so valiantly for what they considered to be the privileges of their House that the business had gone far enough. To arrest Wilkes would merely revive his popularity, and lead to a repetition of the disorders which had followed his expulsion. To vindicate their honour, therefore, they again ordered Wilkes to appear before the House, naming April 8th as the day; and immediately afterwards they moved that the House should adjourn until April 9th! Brass Crosby and Oliver remained in the Tower until the prorogation of Parliament [May 8th]: the case against Millar was never proceeded with; and from that time the Standing Order against the publication of debates became a dead letter.

What precisely was the attitude of the King and North to these proceedings? In the first place it ought to be noted that

the question was raised by a Member [Onslow] who had voted against Wilkes's expulsion from the Commons: he ultimately attached himself to North's party, but at the time these proceedings took place he cannot be said to have been a thorough-going Government supporter. In the second place there was nothing unconstitutional in the proceedings. The Standing Order was very explicit: the fact that it had been evaded did not invalidate it. Even Chatham who was whole-heartedly opposed to the proceedings against the Lord Mayor and the two Aldermen took this line:

That the proceeding of the Lord Mayor is censurable [he wrote], I have no doubt; and as far as resolutions asserting the clear right of either House of Parliament, I could not in conscience oppose them, in case the matter should come before the House of Lords; but I am of opinion, that to go further than the *bruta fulmina parlamentaria*, noise without effect, would be neither wise nor becoming.

Very similar was the view taken by the King and North. As early as February 21st George discussed the matter fully with his Prime Minister.

I have very much considered [he wrote] the affair of the Printers that is now coming before the House, I do in the strongest manner recommend that every caution may be used to prevent its becoming a serious affair.

It was not fear of the consequences which troubled the King: having a thorough appreciation of the issues involved he went on to make a suggestion as to the best way of dealing with the Printers.

It is highly necessary that this strange and lawless method of publishing Debates in the Papers should be put a stop to; but is not the House of Lords as a Court of Record the best Court to bring such miscreants before, as it can fine as well as imprison; and as the Lords have broader shoulders to support any schism that this salutary measure may occasion in the minds of the vulgar.

It would indicate that the King had learnt the grim lesson which had emerged out of the earlier attacks on Wilkes.

The whole trouble was due to the fact that the case of the Printers was too inextricably interwoven in that of Wilkes to permit of a calm solution of the problem which faced the Government. Once Thompson and Wheble were set at liberty by

Oliver and Wilkes the authority of Parliament was set at defiance ; and tempers were quickly out of hand. It would be futile to suggest that the Lord Mayor and the two Aldermen were actuated by the highest constitutional motives : they had concerted together to attack a House of Commons which was composed mainly of their political enemies merely in the hope of being able to put the Government to a disadvantage.

Their challenge was one which no self-respecting monarch and Prime Minister could refuse to accept. Taking their stand on the sure ground of protecting the Legislature from attack from without they both agreed—doubtless with the greatest reluctance—to pursue the matter to the bitter end. The King, as soon as he heard that Brass Crosby and the Aldermen were resolved to defy the motion of the Commons, urged North to take the strongest measures against the three men. In a letter written to the Prime Minister on March 17th the King said :

The authority of the House of Commons is totally annihilated if it is not in an exemplary manner supported tomorrow, by instantly committing the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver to the Tower ; as to Wilkes he is below the notice of the House.

At the same time North was enjoined to see the Law Officers in order to consult with them as to the proper procedure in dealing with Brass Crosby and Oliver, both of whom were Members of Parliament. George was determined that North should not repeat Grenville's mistake of ordering an illegal committal.

The same letter again proves how much the King disliked the whole business. In conclusion he said to North :

You know very well I was averse to meddling with the Printers, but now there is no retracting, the honour of the Commons must be supported.

He was also convinced that the best way of dealing with Wilkes was to ignore him. In a letter written to North on March 20th George observed :

I owne I could have wished that Wilkes had not been ordered before the House ; for he must be in a jail the next term if not given new life by some punishment inflicted on him, which will bring him new Supplies ; and I do not doubt he will hold such a language that will oblige some notice to be taken of him.

It is significant that the proceedings against the Printers were dropped. One cannot refrain from thinking sometimes that that piece of political wisdom emanated from the Court.

George suffered many indignities during those exciting days. On March 25th Alderman Townshend publicly insulted the Dowager-Princess in the House of Commons. He denounced her as the 'power behind the throne,' and then named her.

Does any gentleman wish to hear what woman I allude to? If he does, I will tell him. It is the Princess Dowager of Wales. I aver we have been governed ten years by a woman. It is not the sex I object to, but the government. Were we well ruled the ruler would be an object of little signification. It is not the greatness of the criminal's rank which should prevent you punishing the criminality.

Shouts of disgust from every quarter of the House silenced the ill-mannered alderman. On the same day the King, on his way to Westminster, was hissed by the crowds in the streets, and North and other members of the Ministry were roughly handled by hooligans. When going again to Westminster on March 28th George was received with hisses and cat-calls, and a rotten apple struck him on the side of his head. All Fools' Day brought forth another cowardly attack on the King's mother. In a coal-man's cart a Wilkite mob conveyed effigies of the Dowager-Princess and Bute to Tower Hill, where a mock execution took place and the headless effigies were thrown into a bonfire. And in all these disgraceful disturbances were to be seen members of the Opposition, who if they did not outwardly incite the mob to violence and insult inwardly applauded their efforts, and never made the slightest attempt to check them.

* * *

IT WAS COLONEL BARRE, not many days after Grafton laid down the premiership, who twitted North with the seeming hopelessness of the Administration. In a speech which caused vast amusement in the House he likened the State to a ship which in a violent storm had lost its mainmast [Grafton] and was laboriously trying to scud under a very unreliable jury-master [North]. With quiet confidence North readily accepted Barre's statement that the storm was a serious one, but he went on to remark that the

ship had not yet hung out distress lights and that the present crew was quite competent to make port without running the risk of shipwreck. North had obviously taken a shrewd measure of his colleagues in the Ministry. There were gaps to be filled; but with the possible exception of the Woolsack none of them created any serious difficulties; and it is a testimony to his ability as a Prime Minister that in the first five years of his tenure of office there were surprisingly few ministerial changes.

Bristol's attachment to Chatham was greater than his love of office, and his resignation left the Privy Seal vacant. North offered the post to Halifax, who accepted it—not altogether with the approval of the King, who thought the Earl too old for employment. Weymouth went when it seemed certain that war with Spain could not be avoided; and his place was given to Sandwich, an old campaigner in the political arena but still a none too reputable person in private life. When Hawke resigned his post as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1771 Sandwich succeeded him. Halifax was eager to secure Sandwich's place, and North was willing to accede to his request. The King, while he was quite prepared to accept North's recommendation—and did so without any show of fuss—could not refrain from again pointing out that Halifax was rather old for active ministerial life. To North he wrote :

If Lord Halifax is desirous of the Northern Seals, I can have no objection to it, though had I been in his situation and of his age, I should have preferred his motto.

Halifax was then a prematurely old man of fifty-five : his motto was *otium cum dignitate*.

As Lord Privy Seal Halifax was succeeded by the Earl of Suffolk. By no means a brilliant man Suffolk's entry into the Administration was a notable accession of strength from North's point of view. As a result of George Grenville's death and Temple's retirement from politics Suffolk was virtually the leader of the Grenville group of Whigs ; and Chatham characterized his desertion from the ranks of the Opposition as 'pitiable.' Suffolk did not remain in his new office for long : on Halifax's death in the summer of 1771 he succeeded him as Secretary of State. Not less surprising was North's choice of Suffolk's successor

—Grafton. Again the Prime Minister's selection did not meet with the unqualified approval of the King: Grafton had never been forgiven for his desertion in January 1770.

A suitable candidate for the Woolsack caused North a considerable amount of worry. On Yorke's death the Great Seal was put in commission, and Lord Mansfield acted as Speaker of the House of Lords. Such an arrangement could not be continued longer than was absolutely necessary: it called forth a good deal of criticism from the Opposition, who persistently ridiculed the Administration on account of its inability to find a lawyer of standing willing to accept the Great Seal. It has to be admitted that North's choice was not a happy one—Henry Bathurst, a puisne judge, who was equally undistinguished as lawyer and politician; but no such criticism could be levelled against him in respect of the two chief Law Officers of the Crown—the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General. Edward [later Lord] Thurlow had occupied the office of Solicitor-General since the resignation of Willes in 1770. He was a lawyer with a deservedly high reputation as a pleader; and it was not surprising that when an opportunity came to re-shuffle the Law Offices [on de Grey's resignation from the post of Attorney-General to become Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas] North should give Thurlow the Attorney-Generalship. His successor as Solicitor-General was Alexander Wedderburn, an equally brilliant lawyer, who, although he had commenced his political career as a protégé of Bute, had gone over to the Opposition and had been prominently connected with the championship of Wilkes in the Commons. Chatham thought his apostasy 'deplorable': he was only too well aware of Wedderburn's abilities, and knew how they would benefit North's Administration. Granby's place was eventually given to George, Viscount Townshend, who had had a somewhat chequered military career and was a rather dissipated person, having been removed from his office of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland on account of his irregularities in that country. A worthier appointment was that of William Legge, Earl of Dartmouth, as Secretary for the Colonies in place of Hillsborough who resigned in 1772. He was known to favour the Methodists—and even to attend their services; and although George himself always suspected his religious opinions he readily accepted him as a fit and proper person for ministerial appointment.

These appointments are interesting from two points of view. First, they reflect considerable credit on North's powers of judgement. Taken through and through 'the crew' was quite a competent one, and able to fulfil North's promise to Barré in February 1770 that the ship of State would be brought to port without the assistance of 'pilots.' By 1772 even Chatham was compelled to admit that North had given the country a strong Administration; and while Burke deplored it he was nevertheless bound to agree that

the power of the Crown, almost dead and rotten as prerogative had grown up anew, with more strength and far less odium under the name of influence.

Suffolk and Wedderburn—the former 'a pompous shallow man' and the latter a typical political opportunist—might have abandoned their friends in the Opposition for the sake of the advantages which were to be had from ministerial employment; but no such motive can have dictated the action of Dartmouth, who obviously joined the Government because he was convinced that despite its failings it was trying to do what its predecessors had lamentably failed to do—rule the country. There were many who shared that view.

The second point to be noticed in these ministerial appointments made by North between 1770 and 1774 is that often the King's wishes were not scrupulously respected. George's feeling that Halifax was too old may have been a perfectly genuine one, but he could hardly have forgotten that the Earl was a member of that arrogant 'triumvirate' [Egremont, Halifax and Grenville] which tried to 'storm the Closet' in the seventeen-sixties, and with this memory firmly in his mind he may have used the question of age as a means of preventing Halifax's employment. If he did he was unsuccessful: North had good reasons for wanting Halifax in his 'crew,' and North had his way. Similarly with regard to Townshend's employment George himself did not conceal his dislike of the Viscount [George was always unduly impatient of human frailty], but he did not carry his opposition to the same lengths of obstinacy as he had done when dealing with George Grenville.

One is driven to the conclusion that from the start George was prepared to work with North on the conditions of an equal

partnership. On the main issues their views were identical; but both were ready to make concessions in matters of judgement; and this happy relationship was unbroken for a period of roughly twelve years [1770-1782]. Taken side by side, Burke's observation on the enhanced position of the Crown and Dunning's famous resolution to the effect that it 'ought to be diminished' constitute a striking testimony to the efficiency of the King-North partnership. Admittedly it may not have possessed a healthy form; but—again to state a generally accepted fact—the methods of the two partners were neither novel nor revolutionary. The very practices of which George's political enemies complained so bitterly had been sanctified by usage during the period when the Whigs controlled the political machine. The difference lay only in the *source* of the control of the means of keeping together a parliamentary majority. Under the Whigs the control was seldom out of the hands of the party 'bosses'—men like Sir Robert Walpole and the Duke of Newcastle: under the North Administration the control was exercised by the King acting through his chief Ministers.

That George knew as intimately the details of the business of government as any of his Ministers is both a compliment to, and an indictment of, his work as King. It is a compliment in that it reveals an ability to master a mass of complicated details: it is an indictment only when it can be proved that the King had no right to concern himself with such matters. In the eyes of his Whig enemies his chief crime was his so-called interference with the normal process of government; and consequently they continually portrayed him in the role of busybody. But it can be argued that the Constitution as George knew it was in too undeveloped a state to admit of accurate definition of the forms or functions of the procedure known as Cabinet Government. What George did—and therein lay his biggest mistake—was to ignore the precedents of his grandfather's and great-grandfather's reigns. Undoubtedly he did so in the firm belief that they were evil precedents, which detracted from the honour and dignity of the Crown and brought little consolation to the nation; and as such he was bound to break them.

The charge of meddling in affairs of State calls for a closer examination. Brougham put it in its strongest form:

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Not a step was taken in foreign, colonial, or domestic affairs that he did not form his opinion upon it and exercise his influence over it. The instructions to ambassadors, the orders to governors, the movements of forces, down the marching of a single battalion in the districts of this country, the appointments to all offices in Church and State—not only the giving away of judgeships, bishoprics, regiments, but the subordinate promotions, lay and clerical—all these form the topics of his letters; on all, his opinion is pronounced decisively; on all, his will is declared peremptorily. In one letter he decides the appointment of a Scotch *puisne* judge; in another the march of a troop from Buckinghamshire into Yorkshire; in a third the nomination to the Deanery of Worcester; in a fourth he says that if Adam, the architect, succeeds Worsley at the Board of Works, he shall think Chambers ill-used.

Had Lord Brougham been able to peruse the six stout volumes of Correspondence which Sir John Fortescue edited and published less than ten years ago he could have easily multiplied examples of George's activities.

But in effect what does it all amount to? To sustain the charge of meddling with State affairs demands a conception of kingship which was unknown in the eighteenth century—that the King had no right to participate in the business of government. Who then had that right? The Prime Minister and the Cabinet? But constitutional lawyers knew neither Prime Minister nor Cabinet. North himself refused to be known by the former title: he was First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, and in that capacity His Majesty's principal adviser. The Closet was not a place to be stormed, but to be shared with its rightful occupant, the King. That North used the machinery of a Cabinet is admitted: such an arrangement was a matter of political convenience, but it is significant that George, although alleged to be a thorough-going party man, did not exercise his right to preside at Cabinet meetings.

George would have been profoundly shocked had any one convinced him that he was a party man. His one ambition as King was to raise Government out of the mire of party politics: he believed that that ambition was realized when Chatham came into office in 1766. North's was a natural evolution of Chatham's Administration: it was more essentially a non-party organization in that none of the members of the Ministry were attached to the old parties. But it was inevitable that a new party should emerge

—‘the King’s Friends.’ They were not, in George’s estimation, a political party: they were merely a collection of public-spirited and honourable men, who were actuated by the one motive of wishing to serve their King faithfully in the belief that he knew what was best for the realm. Serving under North’s banner were Whigs and Tories; and the rewards for this service came from the only quarter from which rewards could possibly come—the Crown. George held the view that he must be acquainted with the actions of these politicians who professed to serve under his orders. In this respect, therefore, he was a party leader. North constantly sent him lists of the speakers in the Commons and the Lords: George naturally commented upon them—sometimes in the strongest language. He displayed no more than ordinary feelings when he ‘greatly rejoiced at the conclusion of the debate’ which took place on January 31st, 1770, on Dowdeswell’s motion—

That by the law of the land, and the known law and usage of Parliament, no person eligible by common right can be incapacitated by vote or resolution of this House, but by act of Parliament only.

Nothing could bring greater pleasure to George than the practical proof that the legislators of his realm were sufficiently strong of purpose to prevent Wilkes, the disturber of the public peace and a dirty blasphemer, sitting in Parliament.

Evidence of George’s watchful control over the attendance and behaviour of his friends in Parliament abound. On March 14th, 1772, he wrote to North:

I hope every engine will be employed to get those friends that staid away last night to come and support on Monday. If a good countenance is kept, I doubt not but you will find your divisions encrease. I wish a list could be prepared of those that went away and of those that deserted to the minority; that would be a rule for my conduct in the Drawing Room tomorrow.

Or again take the letter which he penned three days later to North:

Your account of the good majority of yesterday [said George] gives me much satisfaction, and is a great proof of the activity you have shown in collecting persons together. I trust those you employ will not be less vigilant to get them to attend tomorrow, when the Committee will certainly be closed.

Seven years later the same tale is told. The King's letter of February 23rd, 1779, to North reads :

The account of what has passed in the House of Commons this day would not have called upon me to return any answer this night, had not I wished to touch on the bad attendance stated by Lord North. I cannot help thinking it criminal in any man at so momentous an hour as the present one holding back and not taking an active part: I therefore am ready to take any ostensible step to show my disapprobation of those who do not attend, and shall very readily concur in any proposition that may come from Lord North on that subject.

A letter to Pitt in December 1790 is interesting because the bogey of 'personal government' had been laid by then. Nevertheless it reveals the same keen interest in parliamentary happenings :

Mr Pitt's note on the Debate of yesterday seems to point out that the division was very favourable; though the moving for Papers is a stale manœuvre of Opposition, yet it always takes with the curiosity of some persons. I trust that the Division on the Convention this day will be as good. More new members spoke yesterday than I should have expected, and probably this day will produce as many.

These excerpts, which are typical of George's views on parliamentary happenings, demonstrate two things: (1) the King's fixed resolve—whether it was misguided or not is another matter—to serve his country; and (2) his anxiety to assist his principal advisers by the benefit of his advice and encouragement. The excerpt from the letter written to North on March 14th, 1772, may reveal George as a party man—even a party leader. From men who called themselves his friends he believed that he had the right to expect practical proofs of friendship—in this case, an effort to restrict the activities of the Opposition on a matter which the King regarded as personal, namely, the Royal Marriage Bill. And he was prepared even to show those of his friends who were faint-hearted how much he disapproved of their behaviour. Let us hark back for a moment to the day when Bedford bearded the King in his Closet, and read him that insolent ultimatum which in effect said that the King must only smile on those of whom Bedford approved. Bedford's behaviour was perhaps more daringly insolent than that of his predecessors, but his

request was not a novelty: it had frequently been made by Sir Robert Walpole, and, through the influence of Queen Caroline, granted.

The letter written on March 17th, 1772, merely congratulates North on the success which had attended his 'Whips.' The employment of 'Whips' in modern party government is so well established that no one now bothers very much about the fact that members' consciences are often strained in their loyalty to party. The truth of the matter is that George had correctly evaluated the political worth of the Opposition.

The uniform conduct of this disjointed opposition [he observed] is a medley of absurdities which tends to nothing less than encouraging a contempt of the laws and of that subordination that alone can preserve liberty, of which they pretend to be guardians.

Their criticism, except on rare occasions, was destructive: they regularly employed obstructionists' tactics: their language was both immoderate and violent. There are times when one cannot refrain from agreeing with George that even the great Chatham was 'nothing better than 'a trumpet of sedition.' Walter Savage Landor, who was no friend of George, was perhaps not so wide of the mark when he said that the majority of the Members of Parliament in this reign should have been 'sent in a body to the hulks!'

With a high sense of duty himself George expected to find it in others. When the country was in danger—as it was in 1779 when he wrote the letter of which a portion has been quoted above—it was 'criminal' for any true-born Englishman to shirk his duty: it would have been, in George's view, a thousand times more criminal to have condoned such neglect of duty from the Throne. It was Benjamin Franklin who observed:

I can scarcely conceive a King of better dispositions, of more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of his subjects.

And those words were written at a time when George is said to have been popularly regarded as the most relentless opponent of the claims of the colonists!

Charged by his enemies with attempting to establish a system of personal government during the period of North's Administration it is strange to find George at that very time strenuously

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upholding the authority of the one institution which was a menace to despotism—Parliament.

I own myself [he wrote] a sincere friend to our Constitution, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, and, as such, a great enemy to any innovations, for in this Mixed Government, it is highly necessary to avoid Novelties.

He accepted this as a rule of kingly conduct: living up to it brought him into conflict with his subjects during the affair of Wilkes and the case of the Publishers. Once only in his long reign he challenged the sovereign rights of the Parliament—in 1784 when he appealed from Parliament to the electorate. But his conception of Parliament was not exactly that of his opponents: they were inclined to seek sovereign rights in the Lords and Commons, whereas George took the more constitutional view of the sovereignty of Parliament—that it reposed in the *Crown in Parliament*.

Furthermore it is strange that never once did he exercise the Crown's right to veto measures initiated in Parliament. When the City of London sent up a monster petition urging him to refuse his assent to the Quebec Bill in 1774 he wrote to North:

I very much approve of the proposed answer to the City Address against giving my Assent to the Quebec Bill; if the expression *no objection*, can be changed without altering the Sense of the answer I shall not object to it though I think it very proper; but am clear though I hope the Crown will ever be able to prevent a Bill it thinks detrimental to be thrown out in or other House of Parliament without making use of its Right of refusing Assent, yet I shall never consent to using any expression that tends to establish that at no time the making use of that Power is necessary.

A despot or dictator would hardly have taken such a sane line of conduct.

Such active participation in the business of government was bound inevitably to strain to breaking point the constitutional maxim—‘the King can do no wrong.’ At the very moment when the North Administration was seemingly seated firmly in the saddle there came the revolt of the North American colonists. Disaster followed disaster, each bringing added discredit to the Government; and in the atmosphere of despondency and injured pride which arose out of these happenings, men, taught to

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believe that the George himself was the Government, hurled accusations at him for failures on land and sea. The recognition of American Independence was regarded as a shameful proof that the King had done wrong—a grievous wrong; but even before this happened the North Administration had collapsed, and steps were slowly being taken to put Dunning's motion into effect by limiting the influence of the Crown.

Revolted America

*A*T SCHOOL WE were taught—and often with lasting results—that between them George III and North lost the North American colonies to the British Empire. But this is bad history. The American colonists parted company with the Mother Country because over a long period of years there had grown up on both sides of the Atlantic some curious ideas on the subject of imperial relations. These ideas had in certain quarters hardened into stupid prejudices long before George III ascended the throne. When we come to review the introduction and repeal of the Stamp Act it will be clearly seen that in England there existed a widespread belief that colonies existed for the benefit of the Mother Country, and it was argued forcibly that such being the case the authority of the British Parliament was paramount in all colonial matters. This view was shared by Whigs and Tories alike; and in the debates which then took place the real point at issue was not so much the *right* but rather the *expediency* of laying an impost upon the North American colonists. The opponents of the Stamp Act, however, tried to draw a curious distinction: Parliament had the right to legislate for, but not to tax, the colonists; and they based their arguments in support of this claim on the constitutional maxim—‘no taxation without representation.’ It occurred only to few that such a distinction was a contradiction in terms, for there existed the equally old constitutional maxim—‘what touches all must be approved by all.’

The chief trouble arose from the fact that public opinion in the Mother Country was lamentably misinformed on colonial questions. A colony was another name for a plantation, which had

been established for commercial reasons : once it was discovered to be rich in raw materials then it was immediately regarded as existing solely for the benefit of the Mother Country. Despite the existence of charters which bestowed legislative assemblies in which the colonists regulated their domestic concerns politicians at home continued to think that they could do what they wished with the colonies. They had rights ; and there are never wanting people always ready to assert their rights. For example, in order to protect home manufactures successive governments at home passed Acts to prohibit the development of manufactures in the North American colonies. In 1699 and 1719 the manufacture of woollens and iron goods were so proscribed ; and the culmination of this policy was seen in the Colonial Manufactures Prohibition Act of 1750. Even Chatham, a resolute opponent of the subsequent policy of coercion, accepted these industrial measures as inalienable rights of the British Parliament. Similarly the Navigation Acts were rigidly enforced to the detriment of colonial shipping and the inconvenience of the colonists, who were driven to import and export goods and commodities in British merchantmen. This seemingly narrow and selfish policy was not illogical. It could with justice be argued that the inconveniences suffered by the colonists were the price which they paid for the Mother Country's protection against Frenchmen and Spaniards. The defence of North America could only be adequately undertaken by a nation which could hold its own on the High Seas ; and the foundations of British naval supremacy were laid by these Navigation Acts.

Both Mother Country and colonies were badly served by the Governors set over the various colonies. In 1758 General John Huske wrote :

Most of the places in the gift of the Crown have been filled with broken Members of Parliament of bad if any principles, pimps, valets de chambre, electioneering scoundrels, and even livery servants. In one word, America has for years been made the hospital of England.

[Incidentally what an indictment of the Whig system of patronage!] Huske may have exaggerated the worse qualities in the colonial Governors of his time ; but this must not be allowed completely to discount his words. There is abundant evidence that few of

the Governors tried to understand the provinces to which they had been appointed.

Under the British authority Governors were sent over to us who were utterly unacquainted with our local interests, the genius of the people, and our laws. Generally they were but too much disposed to obey the mandates of an arbitrary Minister, and, if the Governor behaved ill, we could not by any peaceable means procure redress.

Those words were uttered in 1776 by the Chief Justice of South Carolina—Justice Drayton.

What irked the colonists was that appointments were made without consulting their wishes or interests. Governors came and went; and there remained behind them smouldering fires of discontent kindled by stupid efforts to preserve what they thought was the honour of the Mother Country and their own dignity. Their reports during their period of office to their superiors—‘The Lords of Trade and Plantations,’ who were a standing committee of the Privy Council—were packed with gross misrepresentations; and when any Minister bothered to read them [and on Horace Walpole’s authority we have it that Newcastle left Grenville a pile of unopened colonial reports!] it was only to be expected that an entirely wrong impression should be created on the state of colonial affairs. The colonists, it is true, did endeavour to counteract these baneful influences by sending or appointing agents to represent them in London; but in the main these men were of very mediocre ability and understanding, and their views were seldom asked or canvassed by members of the Government in London.

It is often forgotten that it was not only a mighty ocean which separated Mother Country and North American colonies. Such separation could be overcome by navigation. But nothing could obliterate the religious and social differences which existed between the Mother Country and the colonies. The noble character and splendid achievement of the Pilgrim Fathers, so rightly recognized on the other side of the Atlantic, were transformed into heresy and factiousness by men who looked upon the Church of England as the infallible Christian institution which saved men from being crushed to eternal damnation between the upper and nether millstones of Popery and Dissent. The fierce Puritanical spirit which pervaded life in the New England colonies

was in the eyes of the governing classes in the Mother Country the evidence of the social inferiority of the colonists; for the products of Oxford and Cambridge in the eighteenth century were brought up in the belief that respectability could only be acquired by attachment to the Church of England. Nor could men who enjoyed the privileges of high birth and great wealth have any genuine appreciation of the aspirations of the people of Georgia—a colony founded for the consolation of jail-birds and criminals.

On the other side prejudice played an equally important part. The New Englanders, for example, were essentially *bourgeois* in their outlook. They counted their money-bags and deemed themselves to be—what they admittedly were—men of some importance in the social scheme of things. But they found that the high-born rulers in the Mother Country were quite unconvinced on this count; and nothing breeds discontent as rapidly as thwarted ambition and unrecognized pride. If they could not adorn their comfortable but thoroughly middle-class homes with the arms of their forefathers they could tell again and again the story how they were sprung from a stock which humbled a proud king and defied an army of bishops. They had no jealousy of the Mother Country: on the contrary they cherished her with all the love which is engendered by exile. But they loved their own native North America—the land of their homes; and when they were persuaded that that land was in danger of being placed at the mercy of an unsympathetic British Parliament they unhesitatingly decided where their loyalty lay.

The North American colonies have often been charged with base ingratitude towards the Mother Country. She had defended them against enemies at her own cost. As long as the French occupied Canada and Louisiana that defence had been from the colonists' point of view a vital necessity, for the French were aggressive colonizers, and from their neighbouring possessions in North America looked covetously towards the British colonies. During the whole of this time the colonists had suffered all the inconveniences of a colonial policy framed in London without much fuss or complaint; but no sooner was the power of France broken and the danger of attack removed than they most ungraciously refused to contribute even a modest proportion of the cost of the garrisons which the Mother Country thought fit

to retain in North America as an insurance against any effort by the French to regain their lost American possessions.

The charge is not altogether baseless; but it must not be allowed to obscure the real cause of the trouble—that for many years prior to the outbreak of the revolt there had been constant friction between the rulers in London and the colonists, and that a lack of understanding of each other's views had given rise to a spirit of obstinacy which always made conciliation come too late. It is nowadays generally admitted that American independence was inevitable: a policy of drift had been too long pursued to render it possible to stem the rising tide of American nationalism.

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DURING THE WINTER of 1763-4 George Grenville called together the colonial agents resident in London to tell them that he proposed to raise a revenue from the colonies to meet part of the cost of the troops which were to be quartered in their country. He announced that the most convenient form of revenue was a stamp duty on legal documents and that the figure he had in mind was roughly £100,000 a year; but at the same time he was perfectly willing to consider alternative proposals calculated to produce a similar amount of money; and the agents were dismissed with the instruction to place the Minister's views before their respective assemblies. So far Grenville had acted in a thoroughly statesman-like way: his action was unusual, too, in that it appeared to show some respect for colonial feeling. But there his wisdom ended. Not a single assembly approved of the stamp duty: nor was any alternative plan put forward. Indeed the very suggestion of imposing a tax on the colonists brought forth a howl of resentment; and two assemblies—those of Massachusetts and New York—went to the extent of forwarding petitions against the proposal to 'the Lords of Trade and Plantations,' by whom they were referred to the Privy Council, which in turn recommended that they be placed before Parliament [1764].

The petitions never came before Parliament: nor did the hostile reception accorded to the proposed stamp duty in any way deter Grenville from proceeding with it. He announced his intention of doing so in the House of Commons on March 10th, 1764. It was late at night when he rose in his place on the Treasury Bench; the members were too tired to take much

notice of what he said; and the House broke up without a single Member challenging the wisdom of the Government's decision. Early in February 1765 Grenville introduced his Stamp Bill into the House of Commons. Curiously enough this measure, which was destined to become the spark to fire the American Revolution, produced only a 'languid debate.' Barré, it is true, spoke against it; but his criticism was merely destructive, and meant to embarrass the Administration. On March 22nd, after one division in the Commons, and neither debate nor division in the Lords, the Bill received the royal assent.

The Stamp Act produced a tremendous outcry in the North American colonies. Church bells were muffled; flags were flown at half-mast; men and women donned mourning clothes. It was an opportunity which the reckless and lawless elements in American Society could not resist. The new stamps were burnt; revenue men were roughly-handled; and rioting took place. Agitators no longer had to look round for audiences: they were in the happy position of being able to say 'I told you so'; and in the most intemperate language inveighed against the politicians in London. In Virginia the fierce oratory of Patrick Henry was heard. Speaking in the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg he said:

Cæsar had his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third—

The assembly rose as a man to shout 'Treason.' Patrick Henry waited until the hubbub ceased and then quietly continued:

And George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason make the most of it!

There was a great deal of such talk in North America in the autumn and winter of 1765-6. The colonists soon saw that the only way to bring a proud nation to its senses was to strike at its weakest spot—the merchant classes. British goods were boycotted; and legal documents were drawn up without the offending stamps.

Every ship which returned from the colonies brought its tale of the resistance which was being organized on the other side of the Atlantic against Grenville's measure; and no one in the Mother Country was more concerned about the state of affairs

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existing in the colonies than the King himself. To General Conway he wrote on December 5th, 1765 :

I am more and more grieved at the accounts of America. Where this spirit will end is not to be said. It is undoubtedly the most serious matter that ever came before Parliament ; it requires more deliberation, candour, and temper than I fear it will meet with.

There was a wealth of wisdom in those words, had men paused to reflect upon them.

Grenville went, and Rockingham came in to clear up the mess which his predecessor had left behind him. The baneful effects of the Stamp Act were at once subjected to hostile criticism, which rose to its greatest heights when Pitt treated the Commons to one of his splendid outbursts in January 1766 :

. . . It is a long time, Mr Speaker, since I have attended in Parliament. When the resolution was taken in this House to tax America I was ill in bed. If I could have endured to have been carried in my bed, so great was the agitation of my mind for the consequences, I would have solicited some kind hand to have laid me down on this floor, to have borne my testimony against it. It is now an Act that has passed. I would speak with decency of every Act of this House ; but I must beg the indulgence of the House to speak of it with freedom. I hope a day may soon be appointed to consider the state of the nation, with respect to America. I hope gentlemen will come to this debate with all the temper and impartiality that his Majesty recommends, and the importance of the subject requires—a subject of greater importance than ever engaged the attention of this House ; that subject only excepted, when nearly a century ago, it was the question, whether you yourselves were to be bound or free. In the meantime as I cannot depend upon my health for any future day, such is the nature of my infirmities, I will beg to say a few words at present, leaving the justice, the equity, the policy, the expediency of the Act to another time. I will only speak to one point—a point which does not seem generally to have been understood. . . . Some gentlemen seem to have considered it [*i.e.* enforcement] as a point of honour. If gentlemen consider it in that light, they leave all measures of right and wrong, to follow a delusion that may lead to destruction. It is my opinion that this Kingdom has no right to lay a tax upon the colonies. At the same time I assert the authority of this Kingdom over the colonies to be sovereign and supreme, in every circumstance of government and legislation whatsoever. They are the subjects of this Kingdom,

equally entitled with yourselves to all the natural rights of mankind, and the peculiar privileges of Englishmen: equally bound by its laws, and equally participating of the Constitution of this free country. The Americans are the sons, not the bastards of England. Taxation is not part of the governing or legislative power. The taxes are a voluntary gift and grant of the Commons alone. . . . The Commons of America, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of the exercise of this their constitutional right, of giving and granting their own money. They would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed it. At the same time, this Kingdom, as the supreme governing and legislative power, has always bound the colonies by her laws, by her regulations and restrictions in trade, in navigation, in manufactures—in everything except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent.

It can be seen that not even a Pitt would have solved the difficult problem of imperial relations in the eighteenth century.

Pitt's outburst brought Grenville to his feet, and in that cold and calculating style which he adopted he proceeded to refute the arguments of his distinguished brother-in-law. When he [Grenville] had announced his intention of bringing in the Stamp Act no one had questioned the right of the Parliament to tax the colonists. Why? Because taxation was a part of the sovereignty of Parliament. 'Protection and obedience are reciprocal: Great Britain protects America; America is therefore bound to yield obedience.' Who could deny the fact that the Mother Country had incurred a heavy debt in protecting America? Yet, when asked to contribute a small amount to the public funds, what had the Americans done?

They renounce your authority, insult your officers, and break out, I might also say, into open rebellion.

But he was not surprised that such misfortunes should arise when the recalcitrance of the colonists was openly applauded in the House of Commons. Fixing his eye on Pitt he said:

The seditious spirit of the colonies owes its birth to the factions in this House.

Those words were spoken directly at Pitt.

The 'Great Commoner' was immediately on his feet. The calm logic of Grenville's arguments had made an impression on

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the House: Pitt was determined to dispel it. Facing Grenville who was sitting close by him he said:

The gentleman tells us that America is obstinate; that America is almost in open rebellion. Sir, I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of peoples so dead to all the feelings of liberty, as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest. . . . No Minister since the accession of King William thought or even dreamed of robbing the colonies of the constitutional right until the era of the late Administration. Not that there were wanting some, when I had the honour to serve his Majesty, to propose to me to burn my fingers with an American Stamp Act. With the enemy at their back, without bayonets at their breasts, in the day of their distress, perhaps the Americans would have submitted to the imposition; but it would have been taking an ungenerous and unjust advantage. . . . I am no courtier of America; I stand up for this Kingdom. I maintain, that the Parliament has a right to bind, to restrain America. . . . When two countries are connected together, like England and her colonies, without being incorporated, the one must necessarily govern; the greater must rule the less; but so rule it, as not to contradict the fundamental principles that are common to both. If the gentleman does not understand the difference between external and internal taxes, I cannot help it; but there is a plain distinction between taxes levied for the purpose of raising a revenue, and duties imposed for the regulation of trade, for the accommodation of the subject. . . . I will be so bold to affirm, that the profit of Great Britain from the trade of the colonies, through all its branches, is two millions a year. The estates that were rented at two thousand pounds a year, three-score years ago, are at three thousand pounds at present. Those estates sold then from fifteen to eighteen years' purchase; the same may now be sold for thirty. You owe this to America: this is the price America pays for her protection. And shall a miserable financier come with a boast, that he can bring a peppercorn into the Exchequer, to the loss of millions to the nation? . . . In a good cause, on a sound bottom, the force of this country can crush America to atoms. . . . But on this ground, on the Stamp Act, when so many here will think it a crying injustice, I am one who will lift up my hands against it. In such a cause your success would be hazardous. America, if she fall, would fall like a strong man. She would embrace the pillars of the State, and pull down the constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace? Not to sheath the sword in its scabbard, but to sheath it in the bowels of your countrymen? . . . The Americans have not acted in all things with

prudence and temper. The Americans have been wronged. They have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness you have occasioned? Rather let prudence and temper come first from this side. I will undertake for America, that she will follow the example. There are two lines in a ballad of Prior's, of a man's behaviour to his wife, so applicable to you and your colonies, that I cannot help repeating them:

‘Be to her faults a little blind:
Be to her virtues very kind.’

Upon the whole I will beg leave to tell the House what is really my opinion. It is, that the Stamp Act should be repealed absolutely, totally, and immediately; that the reason for the appeal should be assigned, because it was founded on an erroneous principle. At the same time, let the sovereign authority of this country over the colonies be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised, and be made to extend to every point of legislation whatsoever; that we may bind their trade, confine their manufactures, and exercise every power whatsoever—except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent.

Pitt's sentiments were voiced in the House of Lords by Camden and Shelburne; but their arguments were ably met by Chief Justice Mansfield, who refused to recognize the subtle distinction between the *right to tax* and the *right to make laws* so emphatically stated by Pitt and his friends; and he went a stage further in the argument by taking the line that the colonists were represented in Parliament in the same way as those Englishmen who were not freeholders. It was Macaulay who brought out the real issues involved in the Stamp Act.

The Stamp Act [he wrote] was indefensible, not because it was beyond the constitutional competence of Parliament, but because it was unjust and impolitic, sterile of revenue, and fertile in discontents.

And one of the few men to recognize this at the time was the King.

As early as February 11th, 1766, George had gone to the trouble to state his views on the matter in a memorandum.

The late variety of opinions that have been reported to be mine on the Stamp Act [he wrote], makes it very eligible that I should whilst fresh in my memory put on paper the whole of my conduct during this very arduous transaction. From the first conversations on the

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best mode of restoring order & obedience in the American Colonys ; I thought the modifying the Stamp Act the wisest & most efficacious manner of proceeding ; 1st, because any part remaining sufficiently ascertain'd the Right of the Mother Country to tax its Colonys & next that it would shew a desire to redress any just grievances ; but if the unhappy Factions that divide this Country would not permit this in my opinion equitable plan to be follow'd I thought Repealing infinitely more eligible than Enforcing, which could only tend to widen the breach between this Country and America ; my language to all ever continu'd pointing out my wish for Modification ; on Friday 6th February Ld Rockingham said to Me that now the two partys meant to push for Repeal, or Enforce. I immediately answered that in that case I was for the former ; He ask'd my permission to say so, which I freely gave.

It was natural that those of ' the King's Friends ' who took their stand with Grenville on the need of enforcing the Stamp Act, should emphasize the King's desire to retain the Act on the Statute Book of the Realm, without drawing the distinction which George had so carefully made ; and as a result not only did his traducers charge him with attempting to double-cross his Ministers but Rockingham himself completely failed to appreciate the royal views—and a misunderstanding arose between them.

A strong body of opinion in the country was for repealing the Stamp Act. So successfully had the colonists organized the boycott of British goods that the manufacturers and shippers in the Mother Country were quickly made to whine over their depleted balances ; and they lost no time in acquainting the King and his Ministers of their parlous plight. Commercial interests always played an important part in Whig policy, ; and Rockingham and his colleagues [with one or two notable exceptions] decided on repeal. The measure was formally introduced in the Commons by General Conway on February 21st, 1766 ; and a terrible war of words ensued in the debates on its passage through the House. The Government won the day, and by 275 to 167 votes the obnoxious measure was abrogated.

But at the same time the right of the British Parliament to control the colonies had been clearly defined in a Declaratory Act :

Parliament had, hath and ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force to bind the colonies and people of America.

On the face of it nothing could have been more impolitic ; but it must not be forgotten that before committing themselves to this measure Rockingham's Administration had tried carefully to explore the ground. In February there came before the Commons Benjamin Franklin ; and during the course of his examination his opinion on the reception of such a declaration of sovereignty was definitely sought.

QUESTION : As to the right, do you think if the Stamp Act is repealed, that the North Americans will be satisfied ?

FRANKLIN : I believe they will.

QUESTION : Why do you think so ?

FRANKLIN : I think the resolution of right will give them very little concern if they are never attempted to be carried into practice. The Colonies will probably consider themselves in the same situation in that respect with Ireland. They know you claim the same right with regard to Ireland, but you never exercise it.

Franklin's evidence brought out another point : he stated that his fellow-countrymen did not question the right of Parliament to levy tolls on merchandise carried to America.

The sea is yours ; you maintain by your fleets the safety of navigation in it, and keep it clear of pirates. You may have, therefore, a natural and equitable right to some toll or duty on merchandise carried through that part of your dominions, towards defraying the expense you are at in ships to maintain the safety of that carriage.

Little did Franklin know that his words would produce another cause of misunderstanding between the Mother Country and the colonies.

* * *

IN THE FACE of the conciliatory policy of the King and his Ministers why was it that the discontent continued in the colonies ? Governments must always pay the penalty for weakness. The Mother Country had allowed the defiance of the colonists to go unpunished : the Repeal Act was an admission of defeat by the politicians in London. Moreover, the Stamp Act had brought colonists together in a way that they had never been brought together before. In October 1765 delegates from nine of the colonies met in a General Congress in New York :¹ there they

¹ The delegates came from : Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and South Carolina.

discovered—some of them for the first time—that identity of interests which is the kernel of successful revolution. The knowledge that public opinion was with them hardened the hearts of those colonial leaders who had already come to realize that independence was the only solution of the problem; and there was consequently infused into a certain section of American leadership that quality of bombast and assertiveness which creates bad blood on the slightest provocation and spurns on every occasion the best-intentioned effort at conciliation.

This changed spirit goes far to explain the attitude which was adopted in various colonies on the subject of the quartering of troops. In one colonial assembly, for example, it was asserted that the provision of quarters for the soldiers was a form of revenue for the Mother Country, and was therefore as bad in principle as the infamous Stamp Act. Had not the great Pitt himself said at Westminster that the Mother Country had no right whatsoever to levy any imposts on the colonists? This chicken came home to roost almost as soon as Pitt [now Chatham] succeeded Rockingham as Prime Minister. Writing to his friend, Shelburne, in February 1767, Chatham said:

America affords a gloomy prospect. A spirit of infatuation has taken possession of New York. Their disobedience to the Mutiny Act [*i.e.*, the refusal to provide quarters for troops] will justly create a great ferment here, open a fair field to the arraigners of America, and leave no room to any to say a word in their defence. I foresee confusion will ensue. . . . The torrent of indignation in Parliament will, I apprehend, become irresistible; and they will draw upon their heads national resentment by their ingratitude, and ruin, I fear, upon the whole State by the consequences.

It was, indeed, ‘a gloomy prospect’ upon which Chatham’s Administration looked out.

The subtle difference which Chatham had tried to make between *internal* and *external* taxation was very present to the mind of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend. To prevent smuggling [and along the Atlantic seaboard of the North American colonies the smuggler’s business was the most lucrative of callings] Commissioners of Customs were appointed, and sent out from London; and although they were universally detested they succeeded in checking some of the illegal traffic. Franklin might grandly say that the Mother Country had a right

to such custom duties, but his fellow-countrymen quickly interpreted the presence of the commissioners as proof that the British politicians were resolved to have their pound of flesh out of the colonies.

On May 13th, 1767, the brilliant Charles Townshend took the next step towards calamity. In the House of Commons he said :

He knew the mode by which a Revenue might be drawn from the Americans, without giving them offence.

And he at once outlined his proposals, which amounted to the laying of duties on such commodities as glass, paper, white and red lead, painters' colours, pasteboard and tea shipped into the North American colonies. The Members generally were delighted with the terms of the new Revenue Bill: it saved British pockets—always, in their opinion, too readily raided; and it could not—on Franklin's admission at the Bar of the House—produce any ill effects in the colonies. The result was that the Revenue Bill was piloted through the Commons without much difficulty: in the Lords only Camden rose to condemn it.

But Townshend's behaviour was most irregular. On the authority of Grafton we have it that his chief colleague in the Commons—General Conway—‘stood astonished at the unauthorized proceeding of his vain and imprudent colleague.’ In short, Townshend had brought in a measure without first consulting his colleagues in the Cabinet. Men with greater spirit might have saved the situation either by demanding the resignation of Townshend or resigning themselves. But all Grafton, who was virtually head of the Administration, did was to mention the matter to Chatham after the Bill was well on its way through the Commons! And Chatham, then in the throes of that awful melancholia which nearly deprived him of his reason, merely fumed and raged at the news.

No one of the Ministry [wrote Grafton in an attempt to justify his pusillanimity] had authority sufficient to advise the dismission of Mr Charles Townshend, and nothing less could have stopped the measure; Lord Chatham's absence being, in this instance as well as others, much to be lamented.

Comment on Grafton's and Chatham's behaviour is hardly necessary.

In America tempers were too badly frayed to allow of a

differentiation between *internal* and *external* taxation. The new Revenue Act was a hostile Act, and immediately discontent flamed up in the various colonies. It was sedulously fanned by the attractive logic of John Dickinson's arguments in his *Farmer's Letters*, which have been described as 'the most widely read products of the controversy with Great Britain' until the time of Tom Paine. The Governors were powerless: they could not command the support of the colonial legislatures, and the forces at their disposal were too small to undertake an effective policy of repression.

Chatham's resignation in 1768 left Grafton in control of the Ministry. The appointment of a Secretary for the North American colonies was at least an indication that colonial affairs were at last to be given the consideration which was their due; but unfortunately Hillsborough who was put in the new Department was a rather pompous person of no great political ability; and his handling of a delicate situation was so pathetically feeble that he merely aggravated the difficulties which confronted the Ministry. The lawlessness in America was so universal that the punishment of law-breakers was made dependent upon their political opinions—were they for or against the Mother Country. At least such was the view which the Ministers in London took; and to overcome the difficulty they piloted through Parliament a proposal to revive a long-disused Act passed in the time of Henry VIII which would make it possible to bring for trial in England all persons charged with treason. It requires little imagination to realize the effect of such a slur on American fair-mindedness.

Burke went to the root of the matter in his speech against the revival of the statute:

If your remedy is such as is not likely to appease the Americans, but to exasperate them, you fire a cannon upon your enemy which will recoil upon yourselves. And why? Because you cannot trust a jury of that country? Sir, that word must convey horror to every feeling mind. If you have not a party among two millions of people, you must either change your plan of government, or renounce your colonies for ever.

But more telling even than the arguments of Burke was the advice of Thomas Pownall, the Member for Tregony. Pownall had been successively Governor of Massachusetts and South

Carolina ; and he was one of the very few men in Parliament who could speak with first-hand knowledge on American affairs. Time after time he rose in his place to warn the Government not to alienate the colonists from their allegiance to the British Crown.

Grafton himself—and probably here he was influenced by the King—saw that the problem of the relationship of the Mother Country and the North American colonies was one which could not be postponed indefinitely. He was not unwilling to hold out an olive branch to the discontented colonists. The whole question was thoroughly debated by the Cabinet. Grafton declared himself for the entire removal of the duties levied under Charles Townshend's Revenue Act : some of his colleagues took the view that such a course of action would be interpreted as another admission of weakness, and made the counter-proposal that the cause of conciliation could be well served, and the sovereignty of Parliament maintained at the same time, by removing all the duties except that on tea. This party eventually gained its point—by a majority of one vote !

The Government's decision was immediately communicated to the colonial Governors ; but the whole effect was spoilt by Hillsborough who in the circular letter which was sent out assumed the attitude of a parent scolding a wayward child. Grafton, however, went before the promise to the colonists could be fulfilled ; and North, his successor, was the leader of the party in the Cabinet which had stood firm for the retention of the duty on tea in order to stake out the claim of Parliament's sovereignty. Had North been a wiser politician he would have taken particular note of the petition which the people of Massachusetts drew up on receiving the information that the Government proposed to abolish the Townshend duties.

We should be glad [the petitioners said] that the ancient and happy union between Great Britain and this country might be restored. The taking off the duties on paper, glass, and painters' colours, upon commercial principles only, will not give satisfaction. Discontent runs through the continent upon much higher principles. Our rights are invaded by the Revenue Acts ; therefore until they are all repealed, and the troops recalled, the cause of our just complaints cannot be removed.

But George may have confirmed North in his own opinion that one duty must be retained to safeguard a principle : not only was

he always hankering after more ‘firmness’ in government but he sincerely believed it to be part of the royal duty to protect the sovereignty of Parliament from any invasion.¹ Thus in March 5th, 1770, North announced his policy in the House of Commons. The Government, he said, proposed to withdraw all the Townshend duties except that levied on Bohea tea. Pownall, in a speech which was a model of sagacity, put forward an amendment—that *all* the duties should be taken off: in his opinion such a concession would go a long way to remove the grievances of the colonists. Pownall was ably supported by Barré and Sir William Meredith. Grenville, however, took a most curious line during this debate. While he defended his Stamp Act [which, he maintained, could and would be paid] he was ready to admit that the Rockingham Administration had not acted unwisely in repealing it [since they would not enforce it]; but he condemned wholeheartedly the Townshend duties since they brought nothing of any value into the national exchequer; and he wound up by saying that he was perfectly willing to show a conciliatory face to the colonists, though, in his opinion, the amendment of Pownall did not go far enough! The Government held firm to its policy; and the repeal was carried through.

The retention of the duty on tea—a sop to the much-favoured East India Company—was a fatal mistake. On June 8th Franklin wrote to his friend, Dr Cooper :

The repeal of the whole Act would have been a most prudent measure; and I have reason to believe that Lord North was for it, but some of the other Ministers would not agree to it. So the duty on tea, with that obnoxious preamble, remain to continue the dispute.

Franklin was not even then disposed to regard the situation as hopeless, and it is interesting to find that he looked to the King as the one person capable of dealing with the situation intelligently. In the same letter Franklin wrote :

Let us therefore hold fast our loyalty to our King [who has the best disposition towards us, and a family interest in our prosperity], as that steady loyalty is the most probable means of securing us from the arbitrary power of a corrupt Parliament that does not like us, and conceives itself to have an interest in keeping us down and forcing us.

¹ Franklin was of the opinion that North was favourably disposed to remove all the duties.

It must be admitted that George's personal feelings on the dispute cannot accurately be gauged; but from the scanty evidence available it does appear probable that he hoped to overcome the difficulty by stating a principle [the right of Parliament to levy an external tax] and calmly allowing it to fall into the background by not enforcing it too rigidly.

* * *

ON THE SAME day as the British Parliament met to listen to North's proposals in regard to the Townshend duties Boston witnessed that 'bloody massacre' which was to prove itself to be one of the best items in the publicity campaign of the party which meant to have independence. What happened is still in dispute; but a party of troops came into collision with a crowd in the Boston streets; and in the end the officer in command ordered his men to fire. Three people were killed outright; and of the eight wounded two subsequently died.¹

The British peoples have always regarded with horror and detestation the employment of the military in cases of civil disorder. On both sides of the Atlantic 'the Boston Massacre' was condemned as a brutal and unjustifiable act. At home the Opposition thought fit to regard it as irrefutable evidence of the Government's unfitness to direct the nation's affairs: in the colonies Radical agitators found it to their advantage to parade it as a proof of the sinister influences which, they persisted in avowing, were at work to undermine the liberties of the American people. The Boston authorities demanded the immediate withdrawal of the soldiers from their town, and preferred a charge of manslaughter against Captain Preston and the men in his company. Thomas Hutchinson, the Governor of Massachusetts, protested against the withdrawal of the troops: quite rightly he argued that they were needed in the town to preserve law and order. But his protest was ignored, and in order to avoid further ugly scenes the regiment took up quarters in Fort William outside the town.

¹ Piecing together a story from the tales told by both sides the conclusion one comes to is that as a result of an ordinary street riot the soldiers, who were considerably put out by the insults hurled at them ['bloody backs']—a reference to the floggings so common at that time in the Army—had the same sting as 'bastard' has now with working men], acted rather roughly. One thing led to another; and then more or less in self-defence the volley was fired.

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Preston and his men were given a scrupulously fair trial—the Captain's defence being undertaken by that capable American lawyer, John Adams, who was already in the forefront of the colonial resistance. Preston was acquitted, but two of his men were quite rightly convicted on the ground that they had fired before the order was given. The trial was a deadly blow to the politicians in London. Only a short time before they had persuaded Parliament that there was not a jury in America capable of administering the law fairly!

The story of the American Revolution abounds in examples of the stupidity of responsible people at home. When the air was thick with the news of 'the Boston Massacre' the Bishops poked their fingers into the pie. The American colonies were within the authority of the Bishop of London; but this was manifestly an impossible arrangement; and the Bishops thereupon sought to remedy the defect by recommending the establishment of a system of episcopal government in North America. In a way it was a gesture to the principle of self-determination; but the intense hatred of the Episcopacy shut Puritan eyes to such an advantage; and everywhere a shout went up that the Mother Country was out to attack religious liberty.

Fuel was added to the smouldering fires in 1773 when Hutchinson's and Oliver's private letters to Thomas Whately were filched by Franklin and published in the Boston papers. Thomas Hutchinson and Andrew Oliver were respectively Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of the colony of Massachusetts, & both had carried on a private correspondence with Whately, who after being private secretary to George Grenville had been Uncle Secretary of State in Suffolk's department. The letter contained a good deal of criticism hostile to the colonists, al thay were never intended for publication. Franklin's partn the business was thoroughly discreditable: his own defence, that he stole the letters because it was his duty to keep his employers America informed of everything that transpired in England, w. a weak one.

The appearance of Hutchinson's and Oliver's letters in the American press, and Franklin's brazen admission that he had virtually stolen them, aroused the bitterest feelings on both sides of the Atlantic. In America both Hutchinson and Oliver were

execrated as traitors: in England Franklin was looked upon as a mischievous person, who under the guise of friendship was ready to carry out a thoroughly despicable piece of treachery. A memorial from Massachusetts, begging for the removal of the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor on the ground that they were personally ‘obnoxious’ to the people of the colony and obstacles to a better understanding with the Mother Country, was referred by the King to the Privy Council, who considered it in January 1774 at the Cockpit in Whitehall.

It fell to the lot of Wedderburn as Solicitor-General to defend Hutchinson and Oliver. He employed the by-no-means-unusual legal practice of discrediting the accuser—in this case, Franklin. To the Council he presented him as a mean thief, who abusing the sanctity of private correspondence—‘hitherto held sacred in times of the greatest party rage, not only in politics but religion’—had by his despicable action ‘forfeited all the respect of societies and men.’ Worse than Wedderburn’s immoderate language was the behaviour of certain members of the Council. Gower, the President, is said to have laughed outright at some of the sallies which the Solicitor-General made at Franklin’s expense; and an atmosphere of prejudice was quickly created. Years afterwards Charles Fox said:

I remember the prodigious effect produced by that splendid invective. So great was it that when the Privy Council went away they were almost ready to throw up their hats for joy, as if by the vehement and eloquent philippic they had obtained a triumph.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the Privy Council reported to the King that the memorial from Massachusetts was groundless, vexatious, scandalous, and calculated only for the seditious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamour and discontent.

Next day the Government showed its contempt for Franklin’s behaviour by removing him from the office of Deputy Postmaster-General for America. A firm friend he may never have been to the Mother Country; but he was henceforth an implacable enemy. Well might Charles Fox say that ‘we paid a pretty dear price for’ Wedderburn’s ‘splendid invective.’

During 1772 and 1773 much of Parliament’s time was taken up with discussions on Indian affairs. Costly wars and extravagant methods of administration had reduced the great East India

Company to the verge of bankruptcy; and the Directors had been compelled to ask Parliament for assistance. George was extremely well versed in Indian affairs, and held very definite views on the whole Indian problem. He disliked the existence of a trading association which exercised sovereign rights independent of parliamentary control; and his opinion was strengthened by the disclosures which were made during Clive's examination by a parliamentary committee. His conscience was shocked by Clive's behaviour. Writing to North on May 22nd, at the conclusion of what was virtually Clive's trial by the House of Commons, George said :

I owne I am amazed that private interest could make so many forget what they owe to their Country, and come to a resolution that seems to approve of Lord Clive's rapine, no one thinks his services greater than I do, but that can never be a reason to commend him in what certainly opened the door to the fortunes we see daily made in that country.

North shared the King's view. The plight of the Company was his opportunity to effect reform. Government help was offered to the Directors on conditions which allowed Parliament to exercise a supervisory control over the Company. The issues were sharply debated in Parliament. Burke came out as the Company's champion : he argued that Parliament ought not to override conditions which had been carefully defined in the Company's royal charter. North, however, carried his point, and the Regulating Act of 1773 was the result.

It was a cruel misfortune that this first statesmanlike attempt to grapple with the Indian problem [and North seldom receives the credit which is his due for it] should contain the cause of further trouble in North America. To relieve the financial embarrassment of the East India Company the Government not only made the Directors a loan but allowed them to monopolize the export of tea to America. In the past Bohea tea, in which the Company traded, had been brought to England. There it was subjected to a duty of 1s. on every pound. It was taken from England to America, and admitted into the latter country without payment of any further duty. Now the Regulating Act proposed that the duty of 1s. a pound should be taken off, but on entry into the North American colonies a duty of 3d. on

every pound was to be paid. In cold arithmetical terms it came to this: the North American colonists were to be asked to pay 3s. a pound for tea which cost Englishmen twice that sum.

But a principle was involved, and on this principle the relations of Mother Country and the colonies founded. North undoubtedly believed that he was making a concession to the colonists: they, not unnaturally perhaps, thought that it was a subtle attempt to impose upon them a system which they believed violated their fundamental rights. On December 16th, 1773, a party of young colonists disguised as Mohawk Indians boarded the East Indiamen lying in Boston harbour and flung £18,000 worth of Bohea tea into the sea. A general boycott of tea was taken up by other colonies; and was accompanied by a good deal of lawlessness and disorder. Chatham was among the first to condemn the action of the people of Boston. In a letter to Shelburne he wrote:

The violence committed upon the tea-cargo is certainly criminal; nor would it be real kindness to the Americans to adopt their passions and wild pretensions, when they manifestly violate the most indispensable ties of society.

Had Chatham always taken such a sane view the Americans would not have believed so firmly that he was the staunch upholder of their cause in England!

Realizing the seriousness of the situation George at once discussed the matter with North; and together they decided that the hand of authority must be strengthened. It is significant that they selected for the task a man who had an intimate knowledge of conditions in America—Lieutenant-General Thomas Gage. The King gave him an audience on February 4th, 1774, when he freely expressed his views. George was delighted to find that Gage's 'language was very Consonant to his Character of an honest determined Man'; and after the interview he wrote to North an account of what had taken place.

He [Gage] says they will be Lyons, whilst we are Lambs [observed the King] but if we take the resolute part they will undoubtedly prove very meek; he thinks the Four Regiments intended to Relieve as many Regiments in America if sent to Boston are sufficient to prevent disturbance; I wish you would see Him and hear his ideas as to the mode of compelling Boston to submit to whatever may be thought necessary.

Gage had evidently persuaded the King that the root of the trouble lay in that fatal policy of conciliation adopted by Rockingham in 1766, for he ended his letter to North with these words :

Indeed all men seem now to feel that the fatal compliance of 1766 has encouraged the Americans annually to encrease in their pretensions that thorough independency which one State has of another, but which is quite subversive of the obedience which a Colony owes to its Mother Country.

Early in March papers relating to American affairs were laid before Parliament. They told a sorry tale of lawlessness throughout the colonies, but particularly in Massachusetts, and, in the Government's view, constituted a powerful argument in favour of sterner measures. North thereupon proposed the introduction of a Bill to close the port of Boston. As he reported to the King 'there was a good deal of Speaking but very few of the Speakers declared themselves against the proposition,' though some 'doubted the propriety of it.' Its chief opponent in the Commons was Dowdeswell; but Barré gave it a half-hearted blessing—much to the annoyance of his friends on the Opposition benches; and when the Bill came up for the third reading Burke opposed it on the ground that the occasion might never have arisen had the Governor of Massachusetts used force to prevent the robbery of the tea ships! One of the Bill's critics was Charles Fox, who had until recently been an avowed supporter of the Government: he, so North reported, 'opposed the clause allowing your Majesty to restore the Port upon receiving information that the State thereof would admit of the restitution, & afterwards the Clause restraining your Majesty from restoring the Port till the India Company are indemnified.'

The second measure which North proposed came in for much more criticism. It was a Bill 'for the better regulating the Government of Massachusetts' Bay'; and was virtually the suspension of the royal charter granted to the colony in William III's reign. Pownall, who had supported the principle of the Boston Port Act, warned the Government not to take such precipitate action: he was convinced that the suspension of the colony's charter would only result in uniting the other colonies in their resistance. Barré, too, thought that it was too

vindictive: so did Conway, who even went to the trouble of solemnly informing the House that his country was 'the aggressor.'

While this Bill was being debated in the Commons Rose Fuller introduced a motion for the repeal of the duty on tea. Here, he said, was the root cause of the trouble in Massachusetts; and once it was removed the colony would settle down to a quiet and orderly life again. Burke took much the same line, and in support of Rose Fuller's motion he treated the House to one of his best speeches on American affairs. But North was committed to a policy of 'firmness'; and the motion was lost by 182 to 49 votes. The Massachusetts' charter was thereupon suspended.

Chatham unburdened himself on the subject when opposing a Government measure for the quartering of troops in North America. He was bound to condemn the violence and disorder which had broken out in Boston, but he refused to believe that such behaviour warranted the Government's policy of repression, and he pleaded for leniency. Let the Mother Country, Chatham said, 'act like an affectionate parent towards a beloved child . . . pass an amnesty on their youthful errors . . . clasp them once more in ' her arms. Then all would be well: Chatham was perfectly certain of that.

What George not inaptly called 'the feebleness and futility of the Opposition' was clearly to be seen in the Opposition's tactics on the Quebec Bill which was before Parliament in May and June. It was a statesmanlike measure which had been framed on the advice of Sir Guy Carleton, who had a first-hand knowledge of conditions in Canada. But it cannot have been altogether pleasing to the King, for it was proposed to recognize in Quebec the Catholic Church; and George had the Englishman's traditional dislike of Popery. There is something very comical about a situation in which George is depicted as a James II or Louis XIV. Yet such were the comparisons drawn by Opposition speakers; and Chatham in the Lords moved heaven and earth to persuade the Bishops that it was their sacred duty to withstand a measure which would inevitably make the whole of the American continent Catholic! In the Commons the most resolute of the Government's opponents was Charles Fox: he fulminated against the recognition of Popery, and the right of the Crown to nominate the members of the colonial assembly.

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Subsequent events, however, justified the Government's acceptance of Carleton's plan; and the Quebec Act stands out as one of the most enlightened measures in the history of colonial administration in the eighteenth century.

In September and October a fateful colonial conference had taken place in Philadelphia. Fearing that the suspension of the Massachusetts' charter would be taken as a precedent for action against other colonial assemblies and believing that the Quebec Act was a sinister attempt to undermine Protestantism, the colonial leaders went to Philadelphia to discuss a common line of action. Only the colony of Georgia was unrepresented; but among the delegates were a fair sprinkling of loyalists; and although the colonial position was stoutly defended and the boycott of British goods was enjoined there was still a desire for a peaceful solution of the problem—according to the American formula. In a Petition to the King they enumerated their grievances, and begged that they should be sympathetically redressed.

While the Congress of Philadelphia was in session George was writing to North:

The dye is now cast, the Colonies must either submit or triumph; I do not wish to come to severer measures but we must not retreat; by coolness and an unremitting pursuit of the measures that have been adopted I trust they will come to submit; I have no objection afterwards to their seeing that there is no inclination for the present to lay fresh taxes on them, but I am clear there must always be one tax to keep up the right, and as such I approve the Tea Duty.

On the face of it such a statement appears finally to dispose of a policy of conciliation. But after all was not George right? There were two solutions of the American problem: either (1) to grant the colonies independence but to maintain the imperial relationship on the basis of a common loyalty to the Crown; or (2) to force them by force of arms to recognize the authority of the Mother Country. The former solution, while it is to-day accepted as the only possible solution of the problem of imperial relations, would have been resisted by the Whigs for the simple reason that it magnified the dignity of the Crown. Nor would they have agreed to the alternative for the same reason: the subjugation of the colonists would have been

'the crowning glory' of George's policy, and the influence of the Crown would have been greatly increased in consequence. George himself was undoubtedly ignorant of advantages of the system of imperialism which has come into being in our own times; and he cannot be blamed for playing the harder part of a stern father resolved to chastise his unruly children. Had he had the support of every party in Parliament he might even then have saved the American colonies for the Empire. A good father never protracts the punishments which he metes out to his children: they must be short and sharp; and followed by forgiveness. The Opposition never gave George the chance to play a father's part.

It was a new Parliament which assembled at Westminster on November 29th, 1774. North had done exceptionally well at the elections; and he was assured of an increased majority for his measures. But the Opposition was still a compact body of obstructionists, whose brave utterances gave considerable comfort to the revolting colonists. Thus in January 1775, Chatham moved in the Lords a motion calling upon the Government to withdraw the troops from North America. Camden, Richmond, Rockingham and Shelburne spoke in favour of his proposal; and a good deal of extravagant language was used to embarrass the Government.

We shall be forced [said Chatham] ultimately to retract;—let us retract while we can, not when we must. These violent oppressive acts must be repealed—you will repeal them—I pledge myself for it that you will in the end repeal them. I stake my reputation on it! I will consent to be taken for an idiot, if they are not finally repealed!

This was very dramatic; but it was not constructive; and actually Chatham's utterances were rather mischievous in their repercussions in America. When applauding the 'glorious spirit of Whiggism' which animated 'three millions in America', he completely forgot that a similar spirit would have animated the opposition to his own thesis—that whereas Parliament had no right to tax the American colonists, it alone had the right to order their commercial and industrial life!

North had not abandoned hope that the dispute might be settled without recourse to arms. In February 1775 he tabled a

resolution which proposed that Parliament should renounce the right to tax the colonies on the understanding that the colonial assemblies would make voluntary contributions to the expenses of the civil government and imperial defence. North's scheme met with the unqualified approval of the King, who not many days before had written that he was 'a thorough friend of holding out the olive-branch.' In the Commons Pownall, who had hitherto been a stern critic of North's policy, spoke in favour of it: he regarded the resolution as heralding in the dawn of peace. Barré, Burke, Dunning and Fox spoke against it: either it did not go far enough or it concealed some sinister motive. But the resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority of 274 to 88 votes.

In March Burke brought forward his 'thirteen resolutions,' which he argued went farther than North's resolution and would therefore afford a more reasonable hope of a permanent settlement. Presented as only Burke could present a case they were nevertheless quite unacceptable to the Commons, who rejected them by 270 to 72 votes. The truth is that the Members had their own views on the dispute. North had to confess that many of the Members regarded his resolution as 'too great a concession.'

Their warning [he added] was a strong proof that the disposition of the House, independent of any ministerial connection, is to maintain the authority of Great Britain over America.

The Government's supporters were not as easily managed as many writers have tried to make us believe.

The Opposition made the most of their strength: they organized petitions among American merchants, and now and then produced witnesses to attest their views. The Livery of the City of London drew up a petition in April in which they prayed the King to dismiss his Ministers on the ground that they were responsible for the bitterness of feeling existing between the Mother Country and the Americans. It received the treatment which it deserved: George in a thoroughly dignified manner informed Wilkes, who in his capacity as Lord Mayor presented the petition, that when he was in need of advice he would go to Parliament for it. This rebuke made Wilkes and his friends in the City very angry: they resolved to get the better of the King. A Remonstrance was framed, and the demand was then made

that the King must receive it on his throne. But George was not to be browbeaten by such insolence.

I am ever ready [he said] to receive addresses and petitions, but I am the judge where.

An unseemly controversy ensued: but it came to nothing in the end, although the Opposition strained every nerve to use the King's behaviour as a means of discrediting him in the eyes of his subjects.

In the meantime the Rubicon had been crossed on the other side of the Atlantic. Learning that the colonists had military stores deposited at Concord, Gage, who was now Commander-in-Chief in North America, decided to seize them. Early in the morning of April 19th his men came into conflict with the colonial militia at Lexington, and had the worst of the encounter. Two months later a British force succeeded only with the greatest difficulty and with considerable loss of life in driving American militiamen from their positions on Bunker's Hill.

It was inevitable, therefore, that the situation in America should engage the attention of Parliament when it reassembled on October 26th, 1775. But what angered the Opposition most was the news that foreign mercenaries were to be engaged for service in North America and to relieve the garrisons at Minorca and Gibraltar. In both Houses the Government's decision was roundly condemned; and the King and the Ministers were charged with behaving in a way which was 'un-English.' Criticism was levelled against the Government, too, because a Petition from the Colonial Congress—which Opposition speakers argued provided definite ground for conciliation—had been unanswered. In November Burke again pleaded for conciliation, and brought in a Bill to achieve this end. His scheme in effect amounted to this: the repeal of all Acts passed since 1763. Pownall opposed it on the ground that it did not go far enough.

They [the colonists] complain of the admiralty jurisdiction: now that is as old as the act of navigation, by which ships navigated contrary to law were to be seized, and might be brought to the court of admiralty in England, on the express principle that there should be no party juries.

Pownall's example shows clearly how imperfectly even the English friends of the colonists understood the real cause of the trouble between the colonies and the Mother Country.

During the autumn of 1775 North was compelled to re-shuffle his Cabinet. For some time Grafton had found it difficult to subscribe to the views of his colleagues on American affairs. He wished to adopt more conciliatory measures; and when he found that he could not carry North with him he resigned the Privy Seal. Dartmouth had his place. Lord George Germaine was thereupon selected for the office of Secretary for the Colonies. It was a bad appointment; for in American matters Germaine was a 'die-hard' and his previous utterances on the dispute made it difficult for any one to believe that he could take an unbiassed line of action in dealing with the colonists. At the same time Rochford resigned from the Northern Department of State: his place was taken by Weymouth, whom the King gladly welcomed, knowing that the new Secretary of State could show 'firmness' when required. The introduction of Thomas, Lord Lyttleton, into the Government was something of a political triumph. 'The Wicked Lord Lyttleton,' as he was called, had hitherto been a vocal member of the Opposition; and on the first day of the autumn session he had actually moved an amendment to the Address. His morals were atrocious.

North's Bill for prohibiting commercial intercourse with the colonies was vehemently opposed by Charles Fox. Its provisions, he averred, would be ruinous to British trade: it must stiffen the Opposition in the colonies. And yet what was the remedy? Fox certainly did not offer one which would have been acceptable to the colonists. A more constructive line, however, was taken by Grafton in March 1776 when he propounded a plan for ending hostilities in North America. Let the King, said Grafton, issue a Royal Proclamation in which the colonists were requested to lay down their arms and draw up a petition of their grievances on the undertaking that they would receive the fullest consideration on the petition's arrival in England. But the time was long passed when such a suggestion would have been sympathetically received.

Strangely enough it was Temple who most severely discomfited the Opposition in the Lords in 1776. He said:

I do not wish that the nakedness and weakness of my country should stand confirmed by the authority and sanction of testimonies given in this house. It is a time to act, not talk: much should be done, little said: the die of war is cast, the sword is drawn, and the scabbard thrown away. . . . I have heard the war called unjust. I know not who in this house has a right to call it so; not those who voted for the Declaratory Act: those only who denied our right of taxation; and how very few were they!

Temple was honest with himself. He confessed that while he had no confidence in the Government he wished North and his colleagues well.

I will not hang on the wheels of government [he added], rendering that which is already but too difficult, the more impracticable.

Had there been more men of Temple's honesty in the Opposition a very different tale might have been told in North America.

But a state of war existed in America. Gage had failed in the task for which the King thought him so admirably fitted: his successor was General Sir William Howe, who had a distinguished military career and sat as a Member for Nottingham. Bands of colonial militiamen were operating in Canada, endeavouring to persuade the Protestant Canadians to rise against a Government which had permitted the establishment of Popery in their land; and in the Southern colonies Howe's second-in-command, Henry Clinton, was laying siege to Charleston. On July 4th the colonists took their courage in both hands and issued the Declaration of Independence, which renounced for all time the connection with Great Britain. Howe's defeat of Washington at Brooklyn on August 27th was never followed up; and before the year was out the colonial fortunes had been retrieved by a victory at Trenton, which, followed by another success at Princeton in January 1777, gave Washington control of New Jersey. From a military point of view the honours were easy; but their small success had put a new heart into the colonial militiamen; and they withdrew to prepare for sterner encounters.

In May 1777 Chatham put forward another plan for composing the quarrel. He took his stand on Burke's suggestion that 'every oppressive Act passed since 1763' should be repealed; and punctuated his remarks with a slashing attack on the employ-

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ment of the German mercenaries. He was very angry when the Lord negatived his motion by 99 to 28 votes. George was angry, too, at Chatham's proposal. To North on May 31st he wrote :

I am much pleased with Your Attention in sending unto Me a Copy of Lord Chatham's highly unseasonable Motion, which can have no other use but to convey Some fresh fuel if attended to by the Rebels, like most of the other productions of that extraordinary Brain it contains nothing but specious words and malevolence, for no one that reads it, if unacquainted with the conduct of the Mother Country and its Colonies, must [but] Suppose the Americans poor mild persons who after unheard of grievances had no choice but Slavery or the Sword, whilst the truth is, that the two [sic] great lenity of this Country encreased their pride and encouraged them to rebel ; . . . if his Sentiments were adopted, I should not esteem my Situation in this Country as a very dignified one, for the Islands would soon also cast off all obedience.

George was convinced—and rightly—that the majority of Englishmen were with him.

Chatham returned to the charge in the following November, when in the Lords he moved that the King should take urgent steps to stop the war in North America and to treat with the colonists. Unfortunately once Chatham was on his feet he could seldom escape from the pitfalls of demagogism; and his speech on this occasion developed into a slashing attack on the Government for the employment of Indians in the forces operating against the colonists. In sonorous tones he asked the House :

Who is the man that has dared to authorize and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping knife of the savages? To call into civil alliance the wild and inhuman savages of the woods; to delegate to the merciless Indian the defence of disputed rights; and to wage the horrors of this barbarous war against our brethren?

Chatham had found it convenient to forget that during the Seven Years' War he himself had sanctioned the employment of Indians in North America! He might in the midst of this tirade state that he was an uncompromising opponent of any idea of American independence; but agitators were as expert then as they are now in lifting words out of their context; and Chatham's

words were regularly quoted as an indictment of the Government's policy and a defence of the colonial case.

On December 2nd, 1777, Barré rose in his place in the Commons to ask Germaine if he would inform the House whether there was any truth or not in the rumour everywhere circulating in Town that disaster had overtaken the army which General John Burgoyne was marching from Canada to New England. Germaine's reply was received with a terrible silence: the Secretary for the Colonies replied that while there were no official despatches to hand, the Government had been informed from a reliable source in Quebec that Burgoyne had been compelled to surrender to the American General Gates at Saratoga on October 17th. It was a disaster of the first magnitude. Barré might use the occasion as an opportunity for delivering one of his customary attacks on the Ministers; but it was to North whom the House listened most attentively that day, when he asked the Members to display quiet courage in the face of this adversity. The King wrote at once to congratulate him on his speech.

MY DEAR LORD—I cannot help just taking up Your time for a few Minutes to thank You in the most cordial Manner for Your Speech; the manly, firm and dignified Part You took brought the House to see the present misfortune in its true light, as very serious but not without remedy; . . . I shall only add that I can never forget the friendship as well as zeal You have shewn to me by Your Conduct yesterday.

GEORGE R.

QUEEN'S HOUSE,
Dec. 4th, 1777.

Within an hour North had written his reply to the King's letter.

I trust that I am incapable of abandoning Your Majesty's service in times of difficulty whilst my continuance in it can be of any use to your Majesty or the public, but what I submitted, or meant to submit is, that if a storm should rise upon the late misfortunes, which may be appeased by a Change of Minister, no consideration of favour or predilection should make your Majesty persist in your resolution of keeping or excluding any set of men whatsoever. . . . No time shall be lost, and no person who can give good information left unconsulted in the present moment, & I hope that the approaching adjournment of Parliament will soon leave us at leisure to give all our time to the executive business of government.

But the Opposition gave the Government no respite. When Parliament reassembled in January 1778 their forces were marshalled in both Houses to embarrass North and his colleagues. Early in February Fox in an eloquent speech moved that no further detachments of troops should be sent out of the country. Four days later Burke in his ponderous way inveighed against the employment of savages and he was not in the least put out when Pownall defended the Government's action. The strain was telling upon North. Although he was assured of comfortable majorities in both Houses of Parliament, and could therefore easily overcome the tactics of the Opposition, he found it increasingly difficult to persuade his colleagues in the Cabinet—and also the King—that the time had come again to hold out the olive branch to the colonists. On January 29th, 1778, he put the matter plainly to George.

The anxiety of his mind for the last two months has deprived Lord North of his memory and understanding. The promise he has made of bringing forward a proposition for peace with America, and the necessity he thinks there is, from the situation of affairs, of endeavouring to draw some of the Colonies from their claim and plan of independency upon Great Britain make him think it necessary to take some step of a pacifick kind in Parliament but the former opinions, the consistency, and the pride of his political friends and himself stand in the way of everything that would be effective, or, indeed have the appearance of a proposition likely to be accepted in any part of America.

It was the realization of the impossibility of his own position which troubled North; and in the same letter he candidly told George that his dilemma was 'an additional proof to Lord North of his incapacity for the high and important office in which he is placed.' He put himself unreservedly in George's hands.

He submits the whole to his Majesty's pleasure [he added], and, though his health and his understanding are greatly impaired by struggling so long in an office, and in circumstances to which he has always been unequal, he would not on that account suggest a thought of retiring, unless the singularity of his present situation did not make him think it his duty to mention it.

When those words were written North was aware that in Paris American agents were working feverishly to win the

support of the French Court. The information to which he had access as head of the Government must have convinced him that France would not long delay in declaring herself against her traditional enemy, Great Britain; and perhaps not unnaturally North turned his thoughts to the chance of inducing Chatham to direct the King's Government. Chatham's name was universally feared by the Bourbons: he had humbled them as they had never been humbled since they ascended the thrones of France and Spain. His position in the Opposition was now more clearly defined: he was resolutely opposed to the recognition of the independence of the Americans. He might relieve North of a duty which had now become a nightmare.

Nevertheless North in February 1778 placed another plan for conciliation before the Commons. He stated that he was, and had been, in favour of a peaceful settlement of the differences between the Mother Country and the colonies. When he took charge of the Government he found America already taxed; and that right had never been seriously challenged in Parliament. His tea duty was never intended to be a tax: on the contrary it was intended to relieve some of the Americans' burdens. What he proposed, therefore, was to introduce two Bills which he believed would be acceptable both to the Mother Country and the colonies. The first would surrender the right of Parliament to tax the colonists; and the second would empower commissioners to adjust all other points in dispute.

Charles Fox rose to approve North's plan, promising that his own followers would undoubtedly subscribe to it; but other Opposition leaders roundly condemned it. One speaker ridiculed the idea that a proud people like the Americans could be brought to accept such an olive branch from the hands of a Minister so deeply stained with the blood of their kith and kin. The Bills passed both Houses.

There is little doubt that George himself was not enamoured of North's plan. George was a shrewder man than his enemies were prepared to admit: he had probably come to the conclusion that the only concession which would prove acceptable to the colonists was unconditional surrender. In his reply to North's letter of January 29th, 1778 [see page 182] he warned the Minister against coming to a too hasty decision on the subject of conciliation.

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You will remember [wrote the King] that before the recess, I strongly advised you not to bind yourself to bring forward a proposition for restoring tranquility to North America, not from any absurd ideas of unconditional submission my mind never harboured; but from foreseeing that whatever can be proposed, will be liable, not to bring America back to a sense of attachment to the Mother Country, yet to dissatisfy this Country, which has in the most handsome manner clearly [sic] carried on the contest, and therefore has a right to have the struggle continued, untill convinced that it is in vain.

Once again North's convictions overrode the royal advice. Yet there was no resentment from George's side: when the conciliation measures were before Parliament he wrote to congratulate North on the successful way in which they were being received in the Commons.

The breach with France, announced in the Commons in March, brought with it all sorts of political recriminations. Why had the Government allowed it to be effected? Now, owing to their incompetency, the country was in peril of invasion. The King himself faced the new situation calmly, even when its seriousness was emphasized by North's renewed efforts to persuade him to agree to a change of Ministry. On March 15th North wrote to advise the King to take Chatham in his place.

Lord North feels that both his mind and body grow every day more infirm and unable to struggle with the hardships of these arduous times but he could reconcile himself to this state of misery as far as affects himself, if he did not see that his Majesty and the Nation were in most imminent danger of suffering the greatest evils by reposing so much in a person who is not equal to the execution of the trust.

But George replied that while he was prepared always to consider North's recommendations it was his 'sole wish' to retain him at the head of the Government.

I am willing [wrote the King] through any Channel to accept any description of person that will come devotedly to the support of your administration and as such do not object to Lord Shelburne and Mr Barré who personally perhaps I dislike as much as Alderman Wilkes, and I cannot give you a strong proof of my desire to forward any thing you wish than taking this unpleasant step.

One thing, however, George was resolved upon: he would never again make a personal approach to Chatham.

It is not private pique [he said] but an opinion formed on an experience of a reign of now seventeen years.

Chatham's behaviour had lost him the confidence of his sovereign: he was in George's eyes 'that perfidious man' and 'a trumpet of sedition.' Thus every form of argument was used to keep North in office. He was authorized to hold out 'any inducement' to keep Wedderburn in the House of Commons: George knew that with the Solicitor-General at his side North would be able to face more cheerfully the onslaughts of the Opposition.

The manœuvre to bring back Chatham ended dramatically. On April 7th the Earl, a shadow of his former self and supported on the arms of his son and son-in-law, hobbled to his place in the Lords to protest against the recognition of the independence of America. Too ill to allow himself the extravagances of demagogism, he spoke from the bottom of his heart.

I rejoice [he said] that the grave has not closed on me: that I am still alive to lift up my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy! Pressed down as I am by the hand of infirmity, I am little able to assist my country in this perilous conjuncture; but, while I have sense and memory, I will never consent to deprive the royal offspring of the House of Brunswick, the heirs of the Princess Sophia, of their fairest inheritance. Where • is the man who will dare to advise such a measure? . . . In God's name if it is absolutely necessary to declare either for peace or war, and if peace cannot be preserved with honour, why is not war commenced without hesitation? I am not, I confess, well informed of the resources of this kingdom; but I trust it has still sufficient to maintain its just rights, though I know them not. But any state is better than despair. Let us at least make one effort; and if we must fall, let us fall like men.

Richmond with great deference to the old statesman made the obvious reply that the retention of the colonies within the Empire was now impracticable. Let the Government face the *fait accompli*, brought about by its own incompetence. This would remove the danger of war with France—a war for which the country was lamentably ill-prepared. It was in rising to pour

scorn on Richmond's arguments that Chatham fell back in his seat unconscious. On May 11th he passed away at Hayes.

George could not even forgive Chatham dead. When the House of Commons voted a public funeral and monument in Westminster Abbey he wrote to North:

I am rather surprised the House of Commons have unanimously voted an Address for a public Funeral and a Monument in Westminster Abbey for Lord Chatham; but I trust it is worded as a testimony of gratitude for his rousing the Nation at the beginning of the last [*i.e.* The Seven Years] War, and his conduct whilst at that period he held the Seals of Secretary of State, or this compliment if payed to his general conduct, is rather an offensive to me personally.

His unbending nature was the penalty which George paid for being a very human man.

The King was indefatigable in his efforts to meet any dangers from the side of France. He applauded the efforts which were made in the country to insure against possible landings of French troops: he even travelled to Portsmouth personally to supervise the preparation of the Fleet for sea. The Opposition in Parliament could not understand why the Fleet was so long in putting to sea. That criticism called forth from the King a splendid rebuke:

It is very absurd in Gentlemen unacquainted with the immense detail of Naval Affairs, to trouble the House of Commons with matters totally foreign to truth; if I was now writing from my own ideas only, I should be as absurd as them; but Keppel, Palliser, Parker and Hood are men whose knowledge in that science may be trusted.

And Keppel incidentally was a political sailor—and a member of the Opposition! The King's words, however, did not have much effect on North. A few days later he repeated his concern at the delay in the Dockyard: it gave the Opposition a handle for attack on the Ministry. Out of patience George replied:

My good lord, no mortal can withstand the Divine Will of Providence; from the hour I arrived here not an instant has been lost to forward the sailing of this Fleet.

Unhappily when it did sail on July 9th it was the prelude of more trouble for the King and his Ministers. The Honourable Augustus Keppel had recently been appointed by the King, on North's recommendation, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Fleet. On putting to sea his instructions were to prevent from joining forces the two French squadrons fitting out at Brest and Toulon; but he was also told that he was not to risk an engagement if the odds were against him. An indecisive fight took place off Ushant on July 27th. Keppel would have continued the battle on the next day, but during the night the Frenchmen had run for their harbours, and the British commander thereupon decided to return to England to land his wounded and refit.

George received Keppel graciously on his return, and thanked him for his services; but party tempers were badly put out by the failure to gain a decisive victory over the French; and Keppel and his senior officers—particularly Sir Hugh Palliser, one of the Rear-Admirals—were subjected to a good deal of unkind and unjustifiable criticism. The situation was complicated by the fact that the two sailors were active ‘party-men’—Keppel as an opponent, and Palliser as a supporter, of the Government; and their differences led to a party squabble. Palliser so far forgot his duty as to charge his superior in a newspaper article with what amounted to incompetence; and their quarrel immediately divided the officers of the Navy into two camps. It figured prominently in parliamentary debates, when the brunt of the Opposition’s fury fell upon Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was accused of favouring Palliser. Keppel rightly asked for a court martial; and followed up his request with a letter to the King in which he stated that he could not serve as Commander-in-Chief under North’s Administration. The Opposition threatened to move an Address to the King to remove Palliser; but the Rear-Admiral resigned voluntarily; and also demanded a court martial. It was quite impossible to confine the intense party enmities which were stimulated by this unfortunate quarrel to Parliament; and in consequence much hurt was done to naval discipline. Keppel’s acquittal by court martial in February 1779 was the signal for an outburst of mob violence in London: gangs of hooligans paraded the streets, and did much damage to the property of their latest hero’s

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so-called traducers. North's house was forcibly entered; Palliser's home was burnt to the ground; the windows in Bute's and Germaine's houses were broken; and poor Sandwich had to hurry himself and his mistress, the unfortunate Miss Ray, out of the Admiralty. A court martial in turn acquitted Palliser, though he was very properly censured for his newspaper attack on his superior officer. Eventually the trouble died down: there were still many officers in the Royal Navy who shared Admiral Campbell's view that it was wrong for a sailor to mix 'Politiks with his profession.' But reputations were injured: George himself was so thoroughly disgusted with the tactics of the Opposition—and with Keppel's avowed association with Opposition members—that he personally used his influence in Windsor when the Admiral came forward as a candidate for election in that borough. This was a foolish thing to do, and his enemies made the most of it.

There were clear signs that the ministerial position was by no means as strong as it appeared outwardly. A defeat in the Commons on an Opposition motion rattled North very badly: in a letter to the King he said that 'it is become too clear that they no longer wish to see Lord North' as head of the Government. The King tried to reassure him:

I am convinced [he wrote] this Country will never regain a proper Tone unless Ministers as in the Reign of King William will not mind being now and then in a Minority particularly on Subjects that have always carried some weight with popular Opinions.

At the same time he touched North on his tenderest spot: 'the day of trial is not the honourable one to desert me,' said George. North was desperately unhappy in his situation. There was a dwindling party in Parliament: there was dissension within the Cabinet. Feelers were put out here, there and everywhere in the hope that the Ministry could be strengthened; but the negotiations with the members of the Opposition always came to nothing; and in the end North, his difficulties increased by Spain's entry into the war and by the disturbed state of Ireland, had to carry through a reorganization of the Cabinet which gave it little added strength. Thurlow had already taken the Great Seal: Wedderburn, therefore, became Attorney-General. Weymouth's withdrawal from the Southern Department

brought Hillsborough back; and the Northern Department, vacant through Suffolk's death, was eventually filled by Viscount Stormont, formerly Ambassador at Versailles.

The failure of the military in North America to regain control of the country and the coming of Spain into the war caused a great deal more despondency in ministerial circles than is generally realized. Every effort to conciliate the rebel colonists had been rejected: the sailors had no luck at sea in bringing their enemies to battle. The fear of invasion was allowed to hamper plans for a determined attack on the Frenchmen and Spaniards. George alone seems to have recognized that the best form of defence is attack. In a letter which he wrote to Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty, on September 13th, 1779, this fact is clearly brought out:

We must be ruined if every idea of Offensive War is to lye dormant untill this Island is thought in a situation to defy attacks, if there is the smallest spark of resolution in the Country it must defend itself at Home though not a Ship remained for its defence.

George was out of patience with the timidity of his Ministers. He told Sandwich, who was probably the only member of the Cabinet to share his views on this matter, that it was necessary to 'risk something to Save the Empire.' He was not unmindful of the consequences of such a policy, but he was equally certain that 'nothing advantageous can be obtained without some hazard.' North, however, had not the heart to initiate such a policy. So the war on land and sea dragged on in a miserably half-hearted way.

By 1780 condemnation of the Government's conduct with regard to the American colonists had become a hardy annual with the Opposition speakers. But their arguments lost force because they had lost their novelty. Burke restored that element of novelty when he gave notice that he intended introducing a Bill to effect 'economical reforms' in the State. He carried out his intention in February 1780 when in one of his mighty speeches he laid his proposals before the Commons. Charles Fox seconded him. They were certainly disconcerted when North rose to congratulate Burke on some of his proposals; but at the same time he made it clear that while the Government would not oppose the introduction of the Bill it reserved the right to do so

at any stage of its progress through Parliament. The debate was enlivened considerably when mad Lord George Gordon got up to denounce the whole affair as ‘a juggle’ between North and Burke!

The King was by no means pleased with North’s line of action on Burke’s Bill: nor did he approve of the measure which North himself introduced on March 2nd to set up commissioners to examine past and current accounts. It was, in George’s view, too hasty an action: it might be construed as fear of the Opposition. But Burke’s Bill was the first stage in a new line of attack—the limitation of the influence of the Crown; and when Dunning on April 6th carried his famous resolution—‘That the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished’—by 233 to 215 votes North was confident that the end had come for him politically. In a letter to the King, written in the early hours of the following morning, he tendered his resignation, reminding the King at the same time that he had repeatedly warned him ‘that this event would happen.’ But George was undismayed by this temporary triumph of the Opposition. He was convinced that Dunning’s motion had gone through on a ‘snap’ division: he was perfectly right in that. The whole business had been engineered by ‘Factious Leaders and ruined Men.’

North was embarrassed, too, by the avowed opposition of the Speaker, Sir Fletcher Norton, who had for many years been a good ‘Government man.’ Norton had abused the privilege of the Chair to support Dunning; and feeling between the Speaker and the Prime Minister had run high. George had no use whatever for Norton: when he was informed that the House would have to adjourn for a week owing to the Speaker’s illness he wrote to North:

I have not the smallest doubt that the Speaker has pleaded illness to enable the Opposition to pursue the amusement at Newmarket the next week.

However, Norton, whose ill-health was more genuine than George was prepared to admit, finally vacated the Chair, but not until his friend Dunning had again tried to push home his attack on the Crown’s influence. Dunning’s defeat gave George infinite satisfaction: it proved to him that the previous resolution,

which had caused North so much anguish of mind, was merely one of those accidents of political chance which are so disquieting to nervous politicians.

For some time there had been a genuine desire on the part of certain politicians to relieve Catholics of some of the disabilities under which they had so long laboured. Their champions argued with much force that Dissenters enjoyed a large measure of toleration, and that it was only logical and just to treat Catholics in a similar way. The movement was bound to revive those terrible antipathies against Catholicism which lie so near the surface of English life; and the hostility was intensified when it was found that Parliament was ready to sanction measures of toleration. Foremost among the antagonists of the Catholics was Lord George Gordon, the son of the Duke of Gordon, who combined in a most curious way intense religious feelings with debauchery. Lord George Gordon was more than a little mad. His speeches in Parliament in which he sat as the Member for Ludgershall were strange mixtures of treason and burlesque. One moment he was denouncing the King as a Papist and threatening him with the direst penalties if he broke his Coronation Oath: the next, he was vowing eternal friendship to North and promising to give him an old print of the Marquis of Huntley!

Unfortunately Gordon got mixed up with the Protestant Association. He spoke at one of their meetings in the Coach-makers Hall on May 29th, when he promised to present to Parliament a monster petition which the Association had organized against the granting of relief to Catholics. It was at his suggestion that the members decided to meet on June 2nd in St George's Fields in Southwark. On the appointed day more than twenty thousand good Protestants congregated at the rendezvous. They wore blue cockades in their hats and carried banners inscribed with the words 'No Popery'; and in a body they accompanied their champion to Westminster. No disorder occurred during the march, but when they reached St Stephen's they were completely out of hand, and Lords and Commons going to their places in Parliament were subjected to some rough-handling by the mob. Some of the Peers entered their House with torn wigs and black eyes; fine clothes were besmirched with filth; and every one was fearful of the consequences.

In the Commons the situation was at its ugliest. Lord Gordon was like a jack-in-a-box : he was rushing backwards and forwards to the entrances, one moment to calm his followers, and the next to announce to them the names of those speakers who had opposed their demands. In vain did his relations in the assembly tell him that he was a disgrace to his illustrious family : oblivious was he to the suggestion that he should be lodged in Bedlam. North tried to reason with the poor fellow, but he was at once reminded that if Gordon so wished he could have the Prime Minister torn to pieces by the mob ! In the meantime, however, the military came on the scene, and the approaches to both Houses were quickly cleared.

But that was by no means the end of the trouble. For more than a week London was at the mercy of a dangerous mob. The private chapels attached to the houses of the Bavarian and Sardinian Ambassadors were broken into and ransacked ; the Newgate was burnt to the ground ; prisoners in the New Prison in Clerkenwell were released ; the Old Bailey was plundered ; and houses were fired indiscriminately. London had never experienced anything quite like it. In the homes of the political leaders barricades were thrown up, and servants were armed with muskets and pistols. The magistrates were powerless to deal with the situation ; the Ministry was paralysed into a state of incompetence ; the officers in charge of the troops in the City, realizing that their forces were hopelessly outnumbered by the mob, hesitated to fire.

During these disorders two men kept their heads—the King and Wilkes. George had rightly sensed that there was something more than hatred of Catholicism behind the lawlessness which prevailed in the City : the worst elements in Society were out of hand ; and only the sternest measures would bring them to their senses. Wilkes as Lord Mayor was determined to do his duty as first magistrate of London. While the Ministers hesitated about putting down the riot by force, the King was rapidly making his own plans to do what they feared to do—shoot down the rabble. He had taken the best legal opinion on the advisability of taking such drastic action : it confirmed his own view that every means at the disposal of the Government could and must be used to preserve law and order. It was not an easy decision to reach : George abhorred cruelty in any form ; but,

while he could pity the mob—‘poor creatures, they did not mean mischief!’ he is reported to have said—he had a duty to perform; and no matter how distasteful it was to him personally he never shrunk from doing what he conceived to be his duty. The troops were ordered to fire whenever by peaceful means they failed to disperse the mob. There was considerable loss of life, but eventually order was restored.

If the King, of his own notion, had not ordered forth the soldiery, the cities of London and Westminster might have been in ashes.

That tribute was paid to George by Thomas Newton, Bishop of Bristol and Dean of St Paul’s, who had been an eye-witness of the disorders.¹

Unable to escape into retirement [it has even been suggested that the repeated threats of resignation were never seriously meant: and there is at least some justification for such a point of view] North believed that he might succeed in persuading some of the Opposition to join forces with him. Shelburne, for example, was a possibility: he was the leader of the section of the Whigs which held the view that the war must be continued. Even Fox might be induced to serve: he was a good deal of an opportunist, and might be attracted by the prospect of ministerial office. There was in 1780, therefore, considerable activity behind the political scenes—the coming and going of intermediaries, and personal interviews. George was frankly sceptical about the wisdom of these moves; but he never obstinately opposed them, although he made North clearly understand that he would sanction no ministerial changes until he was satisfied that the newcomers to the Cabinet were ready to act resolutely. The negotiations proved to be abortive: the Opposition demanded places at the Council table which North could not grant without disrupting the entire Ministry; and he was left to carry on as best he could.

North could never complain that he was not wholeheartedly supported and encouraged by the King. To the end George refused to accept defeat. Indeed, though North himself could not be made to realize it, even as late as the middle of 1781 the situation was not from a military point of view unfavourable;

¹ Lord George Gordon was put on his trial for treason, but acquitted. He died in 1793—a Jew, having even suffered on embracing Judaism the physical pain of circumcision.

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and had the Ministry acted with resolution matters must have gone badly for the colonists. In April, Washington wrote:

We are at the end of our tether.

And on May 12th Clinton had secured Charleston, when more than 5000 colonial and allied troops surrendered and a considerable amount of ordnance fell into British hands. Even the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown on October 19th—disaster though it was—was a loss that might have been made good; for, as George accurately noted in 1782, the British forces possessed in New York and Quebec two bases from which dangerous attacks could be launched on the colonial positions.

But North was too tired and dispirited to share the royal optimism. When on November 25th Germaine went to Downing Street to announce that Cornwallis had laid down his arms North received the news ‘as he would have taken a bullet through his breast’; and labouring under ‘emotions of the greatest consternation and distress’ the poor man walked up and down his room, exclaiming ‘Oh God, it is all over!’ George felt the blow as keenly as North; but he was not going to admit it to anyone. He knew that adversity required courage of the highest order; and as Shelburne put it George was richly endowed with that quality of character which can gather ‘firmness from misfortune.’

Parliament met two days after the news of the disaster at Yorktown had reached London. Despite the virulence of the Opposition attack on North and his colleagues in the amendments moved to the Address in both Houses, the Government secured a handsome majority. This delighted the King, who wrote to North:

Lord North’s account that the Address was carried this morning by a considerable majority is very pleasing to Me as it shows the House retains that spirit for which this Nation has always been renowned, and which alone can be preserved in its difficulties; that some principal Members have wavered in their sentiments as to the measures to be pursued does not surprize me; many men choose rather to despond on difficulties than see how to get out of them. . . . With the assistance of Parliament I do not doubt if measures are well concerted a good end may yet be made to this War, but if we despond certain ruin ensues.

George was prepared to admit that a new plan of campaign might be necessary; and he lost no time in asking North to give his and the Cabinet's attention to it. Unfortunately the Cabinet was not united. One party wanted to hurl reinforcements into America; another to withdraw all troops; and a third to hold the present positions with the troops in the country. There was a difficulty over the choice of a suitable Commander-in-Chief. The only man for the job was Carleton, but he would not serve as long as Germaine was in charge of American affairs, and it was no easy matter to dispose of Germaine. Eventually, however, Germaine was placated with a viscountcy; and his place was taken by Welbore Ellis, who was a staunch friend of the King.

In February 1782, however, a shattering blow was aimed at the Government when Conway carried a resolution to the effect

that the war on the Continent of North America might no longer be pursued for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants of that country to obedience.

North immediately wrote to advise the King to 'see, as soon as possible, what other system can be found,' since the defeat of the Government on Conway's motion made it clear that 'the House of Commons seems now to have withdrawn their confidence from Lord North.' George replied that he was 'mortified' to learn that North believed that he must resign, and although the King would not accept the resignation there and then he took steps to see what could be done in the way of ministerial reorganization. Lord Chancellor Thurlow was the agent whom George selected for this delicate task; but he met with little response from the Opposition leaders; and the King was placed in a quandary. Wrongly George took the view that his honour would not allow him to accept the Opposition parties as his constitutional advisers; and in March he even went to the length of drafting a message to Parliament in which he abdicated the throne in favour of his son. It was undoubtedly North who argued him out of his obstinacy. In a letter written on March 19th North said:

I hear Lord Shelburne has told the Chancellor to-day that he will speak to no person but Your Majesty: as an honest man I think myself bound to advise Your Majesty to see him immediately and to try what arrangement can be made. He is preferable to Lord Rockingham inasmuch as he has prepared no measures as a

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preliminary. But I should not propose this step, if it were not absolutely necessary; where an absolute necessity exists, Wisdom will teach us to submit to it with the best grace possible.

Reluctantly George yielded, and on March 20th North announced in the Commons that his resignation had been accepted and that a new Ministry was to be formed. Then after thanking the House for the way in which they had always received him he moved the adjournment for a week so that the King might form a new Government.

Horace Walpole told the tale that the King and North parted on bad terms. But like so much of Walpole's history this tale is not true. Even when negotiating with North's successors the King strained every nerve to ensure that his late Prime Minister did not go into retirement unrewarded for the services which he had rendered his country. He wanted the reward to be equal to that which Sir Robert Walpole had received when he quitted office; for none knew better than the King the real extent of North's sacrifices in his service. When in the agony of mind which resulted from the nomination of the new Ministry he might have given way to recriminations George wrote a most touching letter to North, in which he thanked him from the bottom of his heart for his loyalty and service.

QUEEN'S HOUSE,
March 27th, 1782.

LORD NORTH—At last the fatal day is come which the misfortunes of the times and the sudden change of sentiments of the House of Commons have drove me to, of Changing the Ministry, and a more general removal of other persons than, I believe, ever was known before: I have to the last fought for Individuals, but the number I have saved except My Bedchamber is incredibly few. . . . The effusion of my sorrows has made me say more than I had intended, but I ever did and ever shall look on You as a friend as well as faithful servant. . . .

G. R.

'A Schoolboy's Care'¹

*S*N THE HOUR of their triumph the Opposition leaders displayed none of that generosity towards a beaten foe, which is so characteristic of the British race. They were arrogant and vengeful: in their view it was only right that the monarch who had dared to tilt against the majesty and might of Whiggery should be humbled. Let us, however, be more generous and forgive George, when for a moment, losing heart and fearing to face the future, he toyed with the possibilities of abdication or retirement to Hanover. But in the end his high conception of duty prevailed; and prevented by it from playing the part of a coward, and fortified by the consolation which he could always derive from his religion, George went resignedly forward, certain that in the end he would overcome all his difficulties.

Acting on North's advice he saw Shelburne. The Earl was a man of considerable ability, but few liked him, and his reputation of shiftiness, which was by no means undeserved and called forth from his contemporaries the sobriquet of 'the Jesuit of Berkeley Square,' gave George no confidence in him. Shelburne refused to form a Government: he told the King that Rockingham had a prior claim to the honour. Now Rockingham was the last man whom the King wished to consult. He had nothing but contempt for the Marquis's easy-going ways and insensate love of sport: he detested many of his followers. Thus on Shelburne's refusal the King sent for Gower, whom he thought was capable of holding together the Opposition parties; but the overtures

¹ The title of this chapter, which will be mainly concerned with the relationship between the King and the Younger Pitt, comes from a line in *The Rolliad*, written with reference to the King's decision to accept as Prime Minister a young man not yet twenty-five years old.

A sight to make surrounding nations stare,
A kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care.

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were abortive; and there remained no other alternative but to accept Rockingham as Prime Minister. George resolutely refused to discuss the situation with the Marquis, but through Shelburne he informed Rockingham that he was free to organize his Ministry.

Rockingham was put out by the royal behaviour, which he chose to regard as the signal for a war *à outrance* between the King and his party; and the new Government assumed power in an atmosphere of distrust, which was bound to have disastrous repercussions on public affairs. George has been frequently blamed for his treatment of Rockingham on this occasion. Admittedly not to see the Marquis was an error of judgement on George's part; but he was always a man of strong prejudices; and ungracious though his behaviour was it was not more ungracious than that of the men who so loudly condemned it. The newcomers to power were determined to make their King pay dearly for his past triumphs at the expense of 'the Great Whig Lords.' There was to be no mercy, no concessions: then, when vengeance had been adequately taken—and only then—would they direct their attention to the business of constructive government. In *The Captive Prince*, or, *Liberty Gone Mad*, a contemporary cartoonist was quick to expose the real aims of North's successors. He depicted Richmond, Rockingham, Fox and Keppel busily engaged in shackling the King's hands and feet. Richmond says 'I command the Ordnance'; Fox, 'I command the Mob'; and Keppel, 'I command the Fleet.' On one side of the group stands Shelburne, holding the Crown in his right hand and saying 'Dispose of these jewels for the Publick Use': on the other Burke, saying 'The Best of Ministers, the Best of K. . . .' And poor George is made to say 'Oh! my Misguided People.'

The root of the trouble was the obsession that the King would double-cross his Ministers.¹ Even when Rockingham was wait-

¹ The second Rockingham Administration officially took office on March 27th, 1782. The chief members were as follows:

*First Lord of Treasury: MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM.

*Lord President of Council: Earl Camden.

*Lord Chancellor: Baron Thurlow.

*Lord Privy Seal: Duke of Grafton.

*Chancellor of Exchequer: Lord John Cavendish.

*Secretary of State [Foreign Affairs]: Mr Charles Fox.

*Secretary of State [Home Affairs]: Earl of Shelburne.

*Denotes members of the Cabinet.



THE CAPTIVE PRINCE, OR LIBERTY RUN MAD

By courtesy of the British Museum

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ing to be asked to form a Government Richmond could write to advise him to ‘keep back and be very coy,’ as he had ‘good reason for believing nothing but trick is meant.’ What his ‘good reason’ was it is impossible to say: and one is tempted to believe that it was nothing more than a fiction of a suspicious mind. For, not many weeks after assuming power, members of the Ministry were going out of their way to say that they had received nothing but assistance from the King! On April 15th, for example, Fox informed a friend:

All this time, the King seems in perfect good humour, and does not seem to make any of those difficulties which others make for him.

And Fox had no reason for wishing to ingratiate himself with the King. Three months later Richmond told the same tale, when he informed the Lords that ‘his Majesty had performed with religious scrupulosity all that he had promised’; and his words were more strongly endorsed by Shelburne.

The brutal truth is that George trusted his Ministers a great deal more than they trusted each other. As early as April, when the new Ministry had only been in power for three weeks, Fox recorded the fact that the Cabinet was by no means a happy family. In a letter to a friend he wrote:

We had a Cabinet this morning, in which, in my opinion, there were more symptoms of what we had always apprehended than had ever hitherto appeared.

On taking office Rockingham planned to do three things: (1) end the quarrel with the American colonists; (2) limit the influence of the Crown; and (3) effect rigid economy in the various State departments. This policy was accepted in principle

*First Lord of Admiralty: Viscount Keppel.

*Master-General of Ordnance: Duke of Richmond.

*Commander-in-Chief: General Conway.

*Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster: Baron Ashburton

[formerly Mr Dunning].

Paymaster-General: Mr Edmund Burke.

Treasurer of Navy: Colonel Barré.

Under Secretary of State: Mr Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Admiral of the Fleet: Viscount Howe.

Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland: Duke of Portland.

Attorney-General: Mr Lloyd Kenyon.

Solicitor-General: Mr John Lee.

* Denotes members of the Cabinet.

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by all the Cabinet; but Shelburne and his followers had their own ideas as to the best methods of execution; and they were vastly different from the views of the Rockingham group. Moreover, there were jealousies to be contended with: on his own admission Fox admits that he and Shelburne did not work harmoniously together.

Shelburne shows himself more and more every day [wrote Fox on April 28th]; is ridiculously jealous of my encroachment on his Department, and wishes very much to encroach on mine.

Nor were the members of the Cabinet politically honest with themselves. Richmond, for example, had pleaded for the reform of the representative system for long enough; but when he found that Rockingham would not support his schemes he was ready to throw them over rather than do the honourable thing and resign. Thus it was left to the Younger Pitt to sponsor a scheme for parliamentary reform; but when he raised the question in the Commons in May only two members of the Ministry—Fox and Sheridan—supported him; while others bitterly opposed him. There was no more resolute opponent of Pitt's measure than Edmund Burke, who, so Sheridan declared in a letter written shortly after the debate in the Commons,

acquitted himself with the most magnanimous indiscretion; attacked W. Pitt in a scream of passion, and swore Parliament was, and always had been, precisely what it ought to be, and that all people who thought of reforming it wanted to overturn the Constitution.

It was one thing to preach parliamentary reform when in opposition, but another to be willing to practise it when in power. Pitt's proposal, therefore, was heavily defeated; but the reputation of the Ministers suffered in consequence. Burke's impassioned defence had laid bare the political insincerity of his party: it was unwilling to reform a system which could be worked to such advantage and profit by the party in power!

Dislike of the Rockinghams, as that group was called, and ambition brought the King and Shelburne closer together. The latter, determined to assume control of the reins of power at the earliest moment, ingratiated himself with the King. Shelburne held the view that if the Government was prepared to recognize

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the independence of the Americans—and it had repeatedly said that it was—there was no reason for continuing the war against France, Spain and Holland; and that the recognition of independence might be made part of a general peace settlement. George himself favoured such a policy: in his eyes it had the virtue of ‘saving the nation’s face’ since it avoided a direct admission of failure to people who until recently had been his own subjects. But Fox and his friends took a contrary view: the recognition of independence ought to precede the settlement of the differences with the other Powers. Before the issue was joined Rockingham caught a chill and died on July 1st. Fox was only too certain that the King would not willingly consent to an arrangement whereby he stepped into Rockingham’s place in the Ministry; but he hoped to get over that difficulty by using Portland as a sort of acceptable political shadow [and according to some accounts the Duke was such an insignificant person that he was not fitted for anything better] while he retained in his own hands the real substance of ministerial power. Thus when he saw the King it was Portland’s claims that Fox supported. But he had reckoned without ‘the Jesuit of Berkeley Square,’ whose plans had been laid with cunning and thoroughness; and before Fox realized what was happening Shelburne had been offered, and had accepted, the premiership. Not unnaturally Fox was very angry with Shelburne who had out-maneuvred him so easily and discreditably; and in the belief that his own retirement from the Ministry would compel his rival to come to him cap in hand he sent in his Seals. To Fox’s amazement the ruse failed completely: his resignation was readily accepted, and no overtures were made for his return. More disconcerting was the attitude which his friends took up: only four of them—Burke, Cavendish, Portland and Sheridan—followed him into the political wilderness; and the others—particularly his kinsman Richmond—cursed him for a fool in further disrupting the Whig party.

Shelburne experienced little difficulty in filling the vacancies in the Ministry. He himself took Rockingham’s place as First Lord of the Treasury. Thomas Robinson, Lord Grantham, was made Secretary of State for Home Affairs; and Thomas Townshend [later Viscount Sydney], Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Earl Temple, the son of the King’s old taskmaster, George Grenville, had Portland’s place in charge of Irish affairs; and his

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cousin, William Pitt was sent to the Exchequer. These changes did not greatly strengthen an already weak Ministry; but they enabled it to carry on.

Shelburne did not hesitate to deal with the American question in his own way; and when Parliament reassembled on December 5th the ministerial policy was clearly defined in the King's Speech. The independence of America would be recognized in an article in the general treaty to be concluded with France, Spain and Holland. George delivered the Speech in a firm voice, betraying none of the emotion which he felt on announcing what to the end of his life he regarded as an abject surrender of the sovereign rights of the British Parliament. It was another sacrifice which his kingly duty demanded of him. Nevertheless, when the ordeal was over he turned to the Earl of Oxford and said:

Did I lower my voice when I came to that part of my Speech?

Oxford replied in the affirmative, and a faint smile spread over George's face. He knew that the majority of his subjects shared with him the belief that had it not been for factious politicians the country might have been spared the indignity of giving the Americans their independence.

Shelburne's policy was at once subjected to criticism from two different parts of the House. Fox, in moving the amendment to the Address, said that while he was ready 'to recognize the independence of America in the first instance' he could never accept it 'as a condition of peace.' Burke, supporting him, spoke in similar vein. North, on the other hand, reminded the Government that the country was not in such a state of impotence as to make it inevitable that she must accept whatever terms the enemy thought fit to dictate. He would not oppose the Address, but he reserved to his party the right to oppose the treaty of peace when it was presented for the consideration and approval of the House. He concluded with the remark that he was quite prepared to agree to the independence of the American colonies provided that his country received some gain commensurate with the loss which she was asked to sustain. The session was a short one, and assisted by the votes of North's followers the Government came through without a defeat.

On January 20th the preliminaries of the peace were formally signed. When they were communicated to Parliament it was

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immediately clear that the days of the Shelburne Ministry were numbered. In vain did the Government speakers try to narrow down the discussion to the simple issue—was not the peace which they were now asked to consider preferable to the war which had been so inconclusively waged for so many years? The Opposition, on the other hand, defined the issue very differently—could not the Government have secured more favourable terms? Fox asked the Ministers to produce the conditions of peace which he had drafted while he was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; the House would quickly realize that they were to be preferred to those which were now under discussion, and by skilful negotiation they could have been easily imposed upon the King’s enemies. North’s line of attack took the form of a detailed examination of the terms; and with his customary grace and amiability he argued that the Government had made too great concessions without securing adequate safeguards. Why had they complacently abandoned the American loyalists? Why had they gratuitously granted the Americans fishing rights in the Gulf of St Lawrence? Why had they cheerfully surrendered positions strongly held by British forces outside the boundaries of the thirteen colonies? There was only one answer to these questions: the Ministers were incompetent to deal with the situation.

It fell to the lot of Pitt to wind up the debate and defend the Government. He lost no opportunity in pouring scorn upon the ‘unholy alliance’ which so obviously existed between North and Fox—an alliance concluded for no other purpose than to hamper the King’s government. He lost his temper with Sheridan—and was smartly rebuked by the Playwright-Member for his pains. Pitt’s was not a great speech; and at the end of an all-night sitting the Government found itself outvoted by sixteen votes. Four days later [February 21st] the Opposition proceeded to drive home the advantage which they now so clearly held in the House of Commons. Cavendish tabled a number of resolutions which constituted a vote of censure on the Ministry for its conduct of the negotiations leading up to the signing of the preliminaries of peace. France, Spain and Holland were on the verge of exhaustion; and yet the Ministers were prepared to make them concessions which only nations flushed with the most dazzling victories had the right to demand. Fox followed in the same

strain ; and North continued to press the claims of the American loyalists. In a fighting speech lasting for nearly three hours—on this occasion he was at his best—Pitt defended the Government's action. It surprised him to hear North so boldly urging the continuance of a war which he himself had provoked, and which he might have ended successfully had he shown more ‘firmness’ and resolution. For the war would have to be continued, said Pitt, if the demands which North made for the loyalists were to be secured. The terms which Parliament were asked to approve were the best terms which could be obtained in the circumstances ; and although the Opposition speakers had glibly asserted that they would have secured better terms he [Pitt] was not prepared to accept such wild statements. Again he contemptuously referred to the part which North and Fox were playing. He said :

I will never engage in political enmities without a public cause. I will never forego such enmities without the public approbation ; nor will I be questioned and cast off in the face of this House by one virtuous and dissatisfied friend.

It was the old story of Pilate and Herod conspiring together to defeat the cause of truth and justice ; and all Pitt's eloquence could not shatter the faithless conspiracy. In the early hours of the morning, therefore, the Shelburne Ministry was defeated in the Commons : on February 24th, 1783, Shelburne resigned.

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NORTH'S STRANGE ACT of political apostasy was a cruel blow for George. He had the right to expect kinder treatment at the hands of one whom he had honoured with his friendship. Their's had been a long association : as boys they had often played together ; and in manhood they had stood shoulder to shoulder to meet the desperate attacks of an infuriated Whig Opposition. Each had served the other faithfully : North had shielded the King from the insolences of arrogant politicians ; George had delivered his friend from the inconveniences of dunning creditors, paying out of his own purse North's private debts. Each knew the other's weaknesses ; but they sublimated them to friendship. And when their political association was, as they thought, ended, they parted the best of friends.

It is hard to understand what motives North can have had when he decided to join forces with Fox. He was never the kind of man who is ambitious of political power: he shared none of Fox's advanced political opinions: he was disgusted by his profligate life. There are two possible explanations of North's conduct in 1783. He may have been forced into the alliance by his followers, and only when it was too late did he realize how deeply he was committed. In such a situation his natural obstinacy would make it difficult for him to withdraw from the position he had taken up without loss of honour and dignity. On the other hand, there is always the possibility that his apostasy was dictated by the highest motives. He may have believed that it was in the public interest that he should ally himself with Fox in order to secure more honourable peace terms for his country; and convinced that his point of view was a right one he might readily have agreed to brave the wrath of his sovereign. Whatever the motive, North's conduct lost him for ever the friendship and favour of his King. Thereafter George could only speak of him as '*that grateful Lord North*', the false friend who had betrayed his King to his bitterest enemy.

The enemy was Charles James Fox, one of the strangest characters to take the stage of public affairs in George's reign. Born in 1749, this gifted son of Henry Fox, who was one of the astutest party 'managers' of his day and was responsible for the 'manipulation' of Parliament in the days when the Peace of Paris was under discussion, had flung himself into a life of vice at an early age. He was an inveterate gambler, an indiscriminating wencher, a heavy drinker; but at the same time he was a man of rare scholarship, and a most entertaining companion. Before he was twenty he was returned to the House of Commons, where his maiden speech won unstinted praise from men accustomed to listen to the highest flights of oratory: before he was twenty-one he was in a minor ministerial post, being one of the Lords of the Admiralty in North's Administration. Although Fox took a much wider view of life than his contemporaries in politics he was nevertheless a political failure. He was too mercurial by temperament to make a great party leader: he was certainly never the kind of man to appeal to George III.

His connection with the night clubs of London—and particularly with the fashionable Brooks's—brought Fox into contact

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The King’s forbearance was wasted on such a worthless son: even before his ‘dear friend Charles’ came into power in 1783 the Prince had declared himself an active Opposition man.

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SHELBURNE’S RESIGNATION [George always insisted that it was a shameful ‘desertion’] put the King in a truly unenviable position. Where was Shelburne’s successor to come from? It is a tribute to George’s judgement that on February 25th—the day after Shelburne went—he sent for young Pitt to ask him to form a Government. He was assured ‘of the utmost support’ from the Court, and was free to make what arrangements he thought fit. Pitt asked for time ‘to think of it’; but although he was greatly tempted by the offer he declined on the ground that he was not able to set up a stable Ministry, which was what the country needed. The next choice was Gower; but when the Earl, who was politically the most timid of men, learnt that Pitt felt unequal to the task, he also begged to be excused. There remained North and Fox. The King chose the lesser of the two evils and saw North; but the Earl told him boldly that he was bound to Fox, and would not act without him. The result was a deadlock.

George has often been blamed for having kept the country without a Ministry for nearly six weeks [February 24th to April 2nd]. But can it be truly said that he alone was to blame? Undoubtedly personal considerations lay at the bottom of his determination not to treat with Fox; but it is quite likely that he was afraid that ‘dear Charles’ would fill State offices with his cronies from Brooks’s. As it turned out the fear was justified. Not many months after the Coalition had come into power Northington, who held the office of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, wrote to Fox:

I am sure men of abilities, knowledge of business, and experience, ought to be employed here [Ireland], both in the capacity of Lord Lieutenant and Secreatry; not gentlemen taken wild from Brooks’s to make their *dénouement* in public life. I feel very forcibly the truth of this observation in my own instance, and wish heartily it was better supplied.

And that was not the only example of Fox’s advancement of friends who were ill-fitted for the work of government.

with crowds of dissolute men and women, many of whom traded on his generosity and brought him nothing but discredit in return. He was a friend of Prince Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, the King's younger brother, who in defiance of the royal wishes had married a vulgar little coquette, Anne Horton; ¹ and it was at the Duke's house [which, incidentally, was regularly made to do duty as a gaming den] that Fox first made the acquaintance of the Prince of Wales. Soon the young Prince and Fox were inseparable companions, taking an active part in the night life of the capital, and scandalizing by their reckless behaviour the Prince's father and mother.

The King was convinced that Fox was mainly responsible for the Prince's mad career on the road to perdition. In this he was not fair to Fox, for the Prince was a thorough-going rake when Fox met him. But undoubtedly Fox bound the young man more closely to his own party, anticipating the time when he would be called upon to ascend the throne. The Prince was always assured of a warm welcome in Whig circles: too often his brutal lack of consideration for his parents [the fact that they misunderstood him was no excuse for him to behave like a cad] was applauded, and used to discredit the King in the eyes of the public.

At Brooks's [wrote Horace Walpole] they proposed wagers on the duration of his [George III's] reign; and if they moderated their irreverent jests in the presence of the Prince, it was not extraordinary that the orgies at Brooks's might be reported to have passed at Fox's levées, or that the King should suspect that the same disloyal topics should be handled in the morning that he knew had been the themes of each preceding evening.

But more often than not the Prince was the life and soul of the parties at which his royal father was so coarsely ridiculed. The sad King knew his impotence. When his brother, William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, once remonstrated with him for suffering such abominable treatment in silence poor George pathetically remarked:

What would you have me do in my present distress? If I did not bear it, it would only drive my son into opposition, which would increase my distresses.

¹ See page 316.

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Moreover, the King was rightly annoyed at the way in which the Opposition had acted immediately after Shelburne's withdrawal from the Administration. Previously North and Fox had agreed that when the time came for them to form a Government its nominal head should be Portland. The Duke was so elated at the chance of occupying such an important place in public affairs that as soon as he learnt of Shelburne's defeat in the Commons he proceeded to commit a number of indiscretions. For example, in a 'most secret and confidential' letter to Temple he asked the Earl to remain on as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Temple sent the letter to the King, without bothering to reply to Portland. Richmond, the Master-General of the Ordnance, was similarly approached. In his reply the Duke said that he had so often opposed North in the past that it was now quite impossible for him to serve in the same Administration as the 'friend of Mr Fox' without a loss of honour. Perhaps Portland, who was politically a hopeless nincompoop, did not know that the King by constitutional custom had the right to choose his own Prime Minister!¹

The situation was certainly a curious one. Parliament was still in session: Pitt and the other Ministers had not yet handed in their Seals. The Opposition lost no opportunity in Parliament of criticizing the King's delay in finding a successor to Shelburne. It was, some speakers boldly averred, unconstitutional; and the country was suffering considerable loss in consequence. The King's position was clear: he refused point blank to 'put the Treasury into the hands of the head of a faction'—meaning Portland, whom both North and Fox pressed him to appoint. So every avenue of escape was explored; but no means of escape was to be found; and at last he was compelled to surrender to what he described as 'the most daring and unprincipled faction that the annals of this kingdom ever produced.' On April 1st he informed North to 'tell the Duke of Portland he may kiss my hand to-morrow.' On the same day he wrote to Temple:

Judge of the uneasiness of my mind at having been thwarted in every attempt to keep the administration of public affairs out of the hands of the most unprincipled coalition the annals of this or any

¹ This right is still exercised by the King, though in practice he limits his choice to the political leader who commands the largest following in the House of Commons.

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other nation can equal. I have withheld it till not a single man is willing to come to my assistance, and till the House of Commons has taken every step but insisting on this faction being by name elected Ministers.

George was honest in his attempt to find some other solution of the problem : he knew that the alliance between North and Fox was an unnatural one which could never endure for any length of time ; and what George wanted to give his country was stable government. That he was playing a disinterested game is surely proved by his readiness later to give Pitt a *carte blanche* : Pitt’s political past contained no evidence of any desire to allow the Crown to retain that ‘influence’ which the Whig Opposition maintained it exerted to the detriment of the kingdom : on the contrary, Pitt had been associated with measures of reform, which if carried through would diminish considerably the Crown’s influence.

George made no pretence of his dislike of the new Administration.¹ In the letter which he sent to Temple on April 1st he wrote :

A ministry which I have avowedly attempted to avoid, by calling on every other description of men, cannot be supposed to have either my favour or confidence ; and as such, I shall most certainly refuse any honours they may ask for.

His faith in the future, however, was not gone, though it was badly shaken. In the same letter he continued :

I trust the eyes of the nation will soon be opened, as my sorrow may prove fatal to my health if I remain long in this thraldom. I trust you will be steady in your attachment to me, and ready to join

¹ The chief members of the North-Fox ‘Coalition’ were :

- First Lord of the Treasury : DUKE OF PORTLAND.
- Lord President of Council : Viscount Stormont.
- Lord Chancellor : Not appointed : the Great Seal was put in commission.
- Lord Privy Seal : Earl of Carlisle.
- Chancellor of Exchequer : Lord John Cavendish.
- Secretary of State [Foreign Affairs] : Mr Charles Fox.
- Secretary of State [Home Affairs] : Lord North.
- First Lord of Admiralty : Viscount Keppel.
- Master-General of Ordnance : Viscount Townshend.
- Secretary at War : Colonel Richard Fitzpatrick.
- Paymaster-General : Mr Edmund Burke.
- Treasurer of the Navy : Mr Charles Townshend.
- Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland : Earl of Northington.
- Attorney-General : Sir James Wallace.
- Solicitor-General : Mr John Lee.

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other honest men in watching the conduct of this unnatural combination, and I hope many months will not elapse before the Grenvilles, the Pitts, and other men of abilities and character will relieve me from a situation that nothing could have compelled me to submit to but the supposition that no other means remained of preventing the public finances from being materially affected.

* * *

PORLAND TOOK HIS colleagues to kiss hands on April 2nd, 1783. To the onlookers it was clear that the King had the greatest difficulty in concealing his feelings of aversion to the proceedings. The new Master-General of the Ordnance maliciously related how when Fox kissed hands he saw the King

turn back his ears and eyes, just like the horse at Astley's when the tailor, he had determined to throw, was getting on him.

But actually George received Portland and Fox with genuine graciousness: it was only North who was received coldly. Fox, who was the soul of generosity, by no means disapproved of the treatment which the Ministry received at the King's hands. As early as April 10th he wrote:

The King continues to behave with every sign of civility, and sometimes even with cordiality.

Fox was even prepared to admit how difficult it was for George to treat them in any other way than as enemies.

Difficulties loomed ahead. There was an unratified peace to be dealt with—the *raison d'être* of the new Administration's existence. The old promises to effect measures of parliamentary reform and limit the influence of the Crown had to be fulfilled unless the risk of loss of popularity was to be run. And something handsome must be done for that ' estimable young man,' the Prince of Wales, whom ' dear Charles ' and his friends were certain was so terribly misunderstood by his narrow-minded and dictatorial father.

Again it was Pitt, and not a member of the Government, who championed the cause of parliamentary reform. In May he brought forward a scheme which was far more constructive than the one which he had supported in the previous year. It was given half-hearted support by one section of the Ministry; but by the other it was roundly condemned as an unnecessary, and even unconstitutional, measure; and as a result it was turned out by a big majority. Outside Parliament the extremists were

furiously angry at the refusal of their so-called champions—Fox and Sheridan—to keep the promises which had been so often made in electioneering speeches and manifestos. To many, who thought deeply on this subject of parliamentary reform, it seemed that they must depend upon this young son of the 'Great Commoner' for the realization of their schemes. So Pitt's stock began to rise, and Fox's fell. Inconsistency has never been applauded by the British electors; and somehow or other Fox seemed always to be committed to policies which were complete denials of the promises made so glibly to his supporters.

Similarly over the question of an allowance for the Prince of Wales Fox manœuvred himself into a hopelessly untenable position, from which he was easily and ignominiously ousted by the King. It was an article of faith with a section of the Whigs that the Prince of Wales should receive an 'adequate' income from Parliament on attaining the age of twenty-one. Shelburne was aware of the proposal when he took office, and tentatively agreed that £100,000 a year was a reasonable figure for the upkeep of the Prince's establishment. It was natural that Fox, as the Prince's friend, should wish to treat the young man handsomely; and since the Prince would come of age in August 1783 plans were laid accordingly. In the middle of June, therefore, Portland informed the King by letter of the ministerial proposals: Parliament was to be asked to vote a grant of £88,000 a year [which with the £12,000 annually received from the Duchy of Cornwall would give the Prince an income of £100,000]; and it was suggested that the King himself ought to assume responsibility for the payment of the £29,000 which his eldest son owed tradesmen.

It is not surprising that George was terribly angry at these proposals. It was the first he had heard of them; and he maintained that not only as King but also as the young man's father the matter ought to have been discussed with him. There was a good deal of force in the biting comment which occurred in his reply to Portland.

. . . when the Duke of Portland came into Office I had at least hoped he would have thought himself obliged to have my interest and that of the Public at heart, and not have neglected both to gratify the passions of an ill-advised young man.

But the King went one better than his Ministers. They posed as the champions of a much-misunderstood young man, who was

denied a father's love. George, therefore, came forward as the champion of retrenchment, who would not even allow his own 'ill-advised' son to squander the people's money. He presented counter-proposals: he was prepared to allow the Prince £50,000 a year out of his own Civil List, which with the income from the Duchy of Cornwall would give him £62,000 a year; and the Ministry were recommended to ask Parliament only for £50,000 to pay the Prince's debts and fit up his house.

Portland and Fox were in a fix. They had pledged themselves to provide the Prince with £100,000 a year; and Fox was prepared to resign rather than break his word. At the same time he was not at first altogether convinced that he could not carry his point against the King; but he was quickly disillusioned when North in the Cabinet refused to commit himself to support a cause which would so patently give colour to the suggestion, originally made by the King himself, that they were 'the Prince of Wales's Ministers.' Fox was adamant: he would withdraw from the Administration sooner than break his word to his friend. But it is obvious that Fox did not propose to quit office so easily. Somehow or other the Prince must be induced to release him from his promise, and allow the question of the allowance to be settled by a free vote of the Cabinet. The Prince could be as generously-minded as Fox; but at the same time he was very angry and disappointed by the turn of events; and not only did he ache to get the better of his father, but he wanted the money badly to keep his creditors quiet. Some of his intimate friends, aware that Fox's withdrawal from the Ministry must inevitably result in its collapse—and that would mean that many of Brooks's *clientèle* would suffer considerable loss, counselled the Prince to release 'dear Charles' from his promise. Eventually the Prince gave way, but in the meantime it seems certain that Fox himself had taken a hand in the business, advising his friend that the question of the allowance ought to be left to the Cabinet.¹ Fox

¹ The suggestion that Fox himself advised the Prince of Wales to allow the Cabinet a free vote on the question of the allowance seems to be supported by the letter which the Prince wrote to 'dear Charles' on June 18th:

DEAR CHARLES—After what has already passed, I did not require this additional proof of your friendship and attachment: you will see by the letter I have this instant written to the Duke of Portland, how ready I am to take your advice, and that I leave it entirely to the Cabinet.

Yours most sincerely,

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knew what this would mean: the Cabinet would accept the King's proposals. The Prince was thereupon told that Carlton House, where his grandmother had ended her days, was at his disposal; and between June and August he was busily engaged in 'moving in' to his new home, which at once became, as it had been in the days of his grandfather, Frederick, Prince of Wales, the centre of intrigue against the King.

The Government's handling of the unratified treaty of peace brought them nothing but discredit in the country. In the House of Commons it was made only too clear that the Ministers' policy did not differ materially from that of their predecessors in office; and this fact emphasized the insincerity of the protests which had come from Opposition benches when the Shelburne Ministry brought their proposals before the House. Petitions from all parts of the country came in to the King, praying him to ratify the treaty at the earliest possible date; and the growing sense of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Ministry was reflected in the insecurity of the money market. For example, when Portland's Administration took office 'three per cents' [*i.e.* Consols] stood at seventy: before the end of the year they had fallen to fifty-six!

It was Fox's India Bill which brought about the downfall of the Coalition Ministry. At the outset let it be understood that it was an extremely wise measure, which could not have failed to have produced great benefits for the people of India. But it was doomed to failure: not so much because it was believed to be an underhand method of consolidating Fox's power, but because it was virtually an attack on vested interests; and people were not then prepared to admit the modern principle, that in the public good the State is justified in raiding the individual's money bags. Simply stated, Fox's proposals were these: (1) the political power of the Great East India Company should be vested in seven Commissioners appointed in Parliament; (2) the commercial power, which was defined as the management of business undertakings and property, should be placed in the hands of a Council of Directors, who were to be chosen by Parliament from the proprietors of £2000 stock. The seven Commissioners were to be appointed, in the first instance, for a period of four years: at the end of this period the right of nomination passed to the Crown. Vacancies on the Board of Directors were to be filled by a Court

of Proprietors, the members of which were to hold stock amounting to £2000. Where Fox went wrong was in his choice of the original seven Commissioners: it was immediately seen that they were his minions, and this gave force to argument on the other side—that the Bill was designed not in the interests of the people of India but in the interests of Fox and his friends. A contemporary cartoonist brought this fact out in his *Carlo Khan*, which depicted the Khan [Fox] riding down Leadenhall Street on the back of an elephant [North], which was being docilely led by Burke. Incidentally Burke, who had opposed North's Regulating Act on the ground that it interfered with the vested interests of the East India Company, had now completely changed his coat; and there is good reason for saying that the Bills [actually there were two Bills concerned with Indian affairs] were drafted by him.

The King was very proud of his knowledge of Indian affairs; and it must be admitted that he was extraordinarily well-informed on this subject. None knew better than he the dangers which must arise from allowing what was after all a trading association to exercise sovereign rights over a coloured people; and, as has already been mentioned, he was strong in his condemnation of the 'rapine' and other irregularities which were unfortunately committed by the Company's servants. One thing in Fox's Bill obscured, as far as George was concerned, its obvious advantages: it was the transference to Parliament of the right to nominate the Commissioners. This made it patent to him that Fox was out merely to limit the Crown's influence; and George was determined to resist such an affront [there is little doubt that Fox meant it as such] to the bitter end.

In the House of Commons Pitt stood up boldly to defend vested interests, which were so clearly violated by the principles underlying Fox's measure. His eloquence was superb, even if nowadays some of his arguments appear fallacious. In a dramatic outburst Pitt warned people of the consequences which he was convinced would follow the acceptance of such an evil precedent:

No public securities whatever—no public corporation—not the Bank of England—not even Magna Carta itself—would be secure from the innovations of a "ravenous coalition," whose harpy jaws were gaping to swallow a patronage amounting to more than two millions of money sterling.

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His words did not affect the position in the Commons, for two-to-one majorities were secured for the Bills; but their effect was not lost on the merchant classes, some of whom began to tremble for the safety of their money bags.

In the Lords, however, the resistance was more resolute. Thurlow, who provided the King with a carefully-prepared memorandum on the constitutional aspects of the measure, was loud in his condemnation.

As I abhor tyranny in all its shapes [he said in the Lords], I shall oppose most strenuously this strange attempt to destroy the true balance of our constitution. I wish to see the Crown great and respectable, but if the present Bill should pass, it will no longer be worthy of a man of honour to wear. The King, in fact, will take the diadem from his own head and place it on the head of Mr Fox.

It is said that as Thurlow spoke the last sentence he fixed his eyes on the Prince of Wales, who had come to his place in the Lords purposely to vote for the Bill. Camden spoke in a similar strain: if the Bill was allowed to pass, he said, the world would witness the undignified spectacle of ‘the King of England and the King of Bengal contending for superiority in the British Parliament.’ Nevertheless, in spite of these spirited protests, the Bills were given a first reading.

The East India Company petitioned to be heard by counsel. Admitting the abuses of which Fox complained—and they were not prepared to admit the existence of them—they attributed their failure adequately to deal with Indian affairs, not to any incompetency on the part of their servants, but to the irritating interferences of the Government! This was a strange argument to put forward at a time when the idea of *laissez-faire* was almost universally condemned—and nowhere more vehemently than in Whig circles. And there was a growing feeling throughout the country that the Bills were thoroughly bad measures, which ought to be resisted at all costs.

This knowledge decided George to act in a way which he knew would bring down upon his head all the fury of Fox and his friends. He empowered Temple to inform those peers who were still sitting on the fence and wondering on to which side it was most advantageous to jump that support of Fox’s reforms in India would incur the royal displeasure. Portland heard rumours

of Temple's 'lobbying' activities, and he raised the matter in the Lords; but Richmond pooh-poohed his fears; and Temple's cryptic answer in defence of his conduct left the poor Prime Minister guessing. The Commons, however, were not to be so easily placated. A certain Mr Baker rose in his place and moved the resolution:

That to report the King's opinion on any question pending in Parliament with a view to influencing votes was a high crime and misdemeanour.

After a good deal of angry talk it was carried; but before anyone could determine what the next step should be the royal threat conveyed through Temple had worked wonders in the Lords; and Fox's Indian reforms were negatived by 95 to 76 votes.

Thank God! it is all over; the House has thrown out the Bill, so there is an end of Mr Fox.

Such was George's comment when he learnt of the fate of the Bills. He was out hunting at the time: during the first 'runs' he was obviously ill at ease; but after the news arrived he was a different man, and enjoyed a good day's sport.

Fox and his friends were certainly put out by the rejection of the India Bills; but they had no intention of resigning. Why should they? In the Commons they commanded a two-to-one majority; and until the King began to use his influence on the peers the Ministry had been regularly supported in the Lords. It came as a surprise to them, therefore, when on the following day [December 18th] they were requested to return their Seals to the King. Their only consolation was that they were confident that sooner or later the King, so flushed with victory that he would not even receive the Seals from their hands, would have to come back to them; and then they would take their revenge. But on the next day a greater surprise was in store for them, when it was announced that 'Mr Willam Pitt had kissed hands' on taking office as First Lord of the Treasury. But when the suddenness of the news vanished the old confidence returned: it was just 'a boyish prank' on the part of this inexperienced young man who traded on the reputation of his illustrious father.

But was the King justified in acting as he did in order to wreck

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Fox’s schemes of Indian Reform: Lord Chancellor Campbell, in his *Lives of the Chancellors*, answers this question as follows:

If it ever be excusable in a King of England to cabal against his Ministers, George III may well be defended for the course he now took; for they had been forced upon him by a factious intrigue, and public opinion was decidedly in his favour.

Constitutional custom, however, is quite definite that it is never excusable in a monarch to cabal against his Ministers. It is practically certain that the majority of the people of England were not in favour of Fox’s policy. Not many months were to elapse before they demonstrated their disapproval at the hustings; and not even the immense influence which Fox had at his disposal could hold back the political landslide which overwhelmed his party. There was open to George a perfectly legitimate line of action: on the ground that Fox’s Bills were contrary to the wishes of the majority of his subjects he could have vetoed them, and, if necessary, have forced the Ministry to go to the country. One should not forget, on the other hand, that politics in the eighteenth century were practised very differently than nowadays: ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’ was as good a political as Mosaic precept; and George did nothing more than his traducers would have done had they found themselves in his position. A poor defence perhaps for his action, but one which all of his contemporaries could have understood and appreciated had they wanted to do so.

* * *

WILLIAM Pitt was only in his twenty-fifth year when he took office as Prime Minister of Great Britain; but he possessed all the confidence and courage of youth, and a great deal more ability than is usually to be found in young men of the same age. At the feet of his distinguished father he had learnt the arts of successful political management. He was endowed with the gift of leadership; he was a convincing and eloquent speaker; he possessed an illimitable reserve of patience; he was a hard worker; and not only was he politically incorruptible but his private life was unsullied even by the indiscretions of youth. Short though his parliamentary career had been when he was summoned to direct the nation’s affairs [he first entered the House of Commons

on January 23rd, 1781, as Member for Appleby], it was sufficiently distinguished to mark him down as a man of exceptional character and resource, who would not sacrifice his principles either for the favours of a sovereign or the advancement of a faction. Throughout his relatively short life [he was destined to die in his forty-seventh year] he knew only one love—the love of country; but he cherished it as dearly and as loyally as other men cherish the love of a sweet woman. He was a man of surprisingly few friends because his passion for work made it impossible for him to respect the duties of friendship; and his over-indulgence in port wine was in his age more a virtue than a vice.

Pitt took office in December 1783 because he was convinced that he could save his country from the miseries attendant upon the rule of a faction-ridden Whiggery. He had been nurtured in the true Whig tradition: he had acted as a good Whig during the time he had sat in the House of Commons. But he had realized that Whiggery was too riven by factions ever again to become an effective instrument of government; and having a mind which was not shackled by stupid traditional loyalties he proceeded to forge a new party which was to be actuated solely by motives of service to the State. His ability to profit by the mistakes of his opponents, his tremendous powers of assimilation and his reputation as an honest politician were his greatest assets when he came to ask for the support of the electorate; for they were assets which were nowhere to be found in the political balance-sheets of his opponents. Fox's mistakes were to become Pitt's opportunities; and once they presented themselves they were made proper use of, and always to the discomfort of the forces arrayed against Pitt.

As previously stated there was nothing in Pitt's past career to encourage George to believe that he had found a Prime Minister who without questioning would carry out a royal policy. But the King may not have wanted such a man in 1783. What he did want was a leader, who would give the country a taste of honest government; and being by no means a bad judge of men he realized that Pitt was the only man to grapple with such a task. Whatever illusions the King may have had about the right of the Crown to participate in the work of government had been ruthlessly shattered long before December 1783; and as he now

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approached middle age he looked earnestly around for safety. He must have been already aware that the worries which he suffered as a result of the chronic state of political life in his realm were undermining his health of body and peace of mind; and consequently he was not unwilling to make sacrifices once he was certain that his realm would be ordered with that ‘firmness’ which he so much admired, and which he believed was the essence of a respect for law and order.

It was not necessary to make conditions when Pitt came into power. On the one hand, they would never have been accepted; and, on the other, there were actually no conditions to make. All that George demanded of Pitt was that he would deliver him from the loathsome tutelage imposed on him by his late Ministers. The price which the King paid—and paid willingly—for the promise of deliverance from the insolences of Faction was the *carte blanche*. Although in the business of State George was never better served by any politician than he was by Pitt it is significant that to the end their relationship was that of sovereign and minister. There were times when Pitt’s magnificent services to his country demanded handsome recognition. George gave that recognition, but in a much more impersonal way than he had done in his dealings with Bute and North. It was none the less gracious for that reason. Under Pitt’s influence—here again it must be remembered that the influence was indirect—George was brought to the heart of the Revolution Settlement as it concerned kinship: he came to understand, as he had never understood before, that the King of England, while of the government, must always be above it.

* * *

PEALS OF LAUGHTER rang through the House of Commons when it was known that the youthful Member for Appleby was to be the First Minister of the Crown. Not many days before there had been laughter, when in one of his grand moments Fox had twitted Pitt with being ‘a boy without judgement, experience, or knowledge of the world.’ And now this same young man had the effrontery to face a House of Commons where the Opposition to his Administration could safely count upon two-to-one majorities! It is not surprising, therefore, that Fox about a week later should write to his friend Northington, the Lord-

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Lieutenant of Ireland, advising him 'not to quit his house nor dismiss a single servant.'

Pitt found it a most difficult task to get a Ministry together. After two days one of the Secretaries of State [Temple] withdrew, huffed, so it is said, because he was not raised to ducal rank as a reward for his part in turning Fox and North out of office. Pitt hoped to persuade Grafton and Camden to join him; but both refused. Eventually a very 'scratch' team was got together.

First Lord of the Treasury : }
and } Mr WILLIAM Pitt.
Chancellor of the Exchequer :

Lord Chancellor : Baron Thurlow.

Lord Privy Seal : Duke of Rutland.

Secretary of State [Foreign Affairs] : Marquis of Carmarthen.

Secretary of State [Home Affairs] : Viscount Sydney.

Master-General of the Ordnance : Duke of Richmond.

First Lord of the Admiralty : Baron [later Earl] Howe.

Secretary at War : Sir George Young.

Paymasters-General : Mr William Wyndham Grenville and
Baron Mulgrave.

Treasurer of the Navy : Mr Henry Dundas.

Attorney-General : Mr Lloyd Kenyon.

Solicitor-General : Mr Richard Pepper Arden.

But, 'scratch' lot though they were, they were prepared to hang on under Pitt's leadership; and that was all he asked of them for the moment.

Pitt's plan of campaign was to appeal to the country as soon as he was certain that public opinion was in his favour. Fox, on the other hand, already aware that he was none too popular in many of the constituencies, strove to avoid a dissolution. He believed that it would be no difficult matter to drive his rival from office by consistently wrecking his measures before Parliament. Fox's was a fatal mistake: by opposing a dissolution of Parliament he played into Pitt's hands. Pitt experienced a good deal of difficulty in persuading his colleagues to agree to his plan. Thurlow, in particular, wanted to appeal to the electorate without delay. Even George held a similar opinion, which became stronger as he witnessed the hopelessness of Pitt's position in the Commons. Measures were introduced and were speedily negatived. There



GEORGE III, ABOUT 1782

*From Windsor Castle, by gracious permission of
His Majesty the King*

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were insinuations that the King was violating the Constitution by retaining Pitt in office. On January 24th, 1784, George pressed the point in a letter to his Prime Minister.

I own [he said] I cannot see the reason, if the thing is practicable, that a Dissolution should not be effected : if not I fear the Constitution of this country cannot subsist.

When the young man replied that the time was not ripe for an appeal to the country the King wrote :

I desire Mr Pitt will assemble the confidential Ministers this evening, that he may state what has passed this day [*i.e.* January 24th]. I should think he cannot give any reason for preventing a Dissolution on Monday ; but, if he should, he must be armed with the Opinion of the other Ministers.

After a lengthy discussion the Cabinet accepted the Prime Minister’s arguments in favour of waiting a little longer.

Pitt had much of his father’s appreciation of the value of the dramatic in politics. Soon after he came into power in December 1783 the death of Sir Edward Walpole vacated one of the choicest sinecures in Government’s gift—the Clerkship of the Pells, worth anything from three to six thousands a year. No one would have thought any the worse of Pitt had he—a notoriously poor man—kept the office in his own hands; but to every one’s amazement he bestowed it upon Colonel Barré, on the understanding that he surrendered a pension, chargeable to public funds, which had been granted him during the Rockingham Administration. There was political honesty with a vengeance ! And the country, sickened by the graft and grab which were inseparably connected with politics, were insensibly drawn to this young Prime Minister, who was ‘a chip of the old block.’

The Opposition’s persistent efforts to wreck Pitt’s measures were uniformly successful ; and the Ministers grew uneasy as to what would happen when the time came for Parliament to deal with supplies. If obstructionist tactics were continued then chaos would result ; and the King must either recall his former Ministers or force Pitt to appeal to the country. There is evidence that Pitt himself was none too confident about the issue : his brother-in-law, Lord Mahon, on the other hand, took a clearer view of the situation, and argued that Fox would hesitate about

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taking a step which could only react to his own disadvantage when [as he was certain would happen] he was recalled to direct the Government. George did not share Mahon's optimism : he was not unnaturally uneasy about the irregularity of the constitutional position—a First Minister who could not command a majority in the House of Commons. Again and again he broached the subject of a dissolution. When it was made clear that if the King insisted then Pitt must resign George was in a torment of anxiety.

If you resign, Mr Pitt, I must resign too !

There is apology in the King's tone in the letter which he wrote to Pitt on February 15th.

Mr Pitt is so well apprised of the mortification I feel at any possibility of ever again seeing the heads of Opposition in public employments—and more particularly Mr Fox, whose conduct has not been more marked against my station in the Empire than against my person—that he must attribute my want of perspicuity, in my conversation last night, to that foundation.

It is hardly necessary to say what the topic of conversation had been that evening.

Pitt's plan worked. The feeling in the country is reflected in a letter written towards the end of February :

Pitt rises every day in character and estimation as to abilities.

On February 28th he was the guest of the City of London ; and among those who paid tribute to his courage was Wilkes. On his return from the civic reception Pitt was attacked by hooligans outside Brooks's ; and had it not been for the courage of his brother, Chatham, and brother-in-law, Mahon, things might have gone badly with him. But the incident did a tremendous amount of damage to Fox's reputation ; and although he protested that he knew nothing about the attack, being in bed with his mistress, Mrs Armstead, at the time, few people believed him. As soon as George learnt of the danger in which Pitt had been placed he wrote to him :

I was much hurt at hearing since the Drawing Room of the outrage committed the last night under the auspices of Brooks's against Mr Pitt on his return from the City, but am very happy to find he

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escaped without injury. I trust every means will be employed to find out the abettors of this, which I should hope may be got at.

Pitt’s parliamentary tactics were equally successful. His quiet confidence and equal temper, his facility to benefit by his opponents’ mistakes and skill as a debater, won him many friends among the waverers in the House of Commons; and the climax was reached on March 8th, when in a hostile House, in which his measures had been repeatedly voted down, he found himself in a minority of only one. George was delighted, and on the following day sent his congratulations :

Mr Pitt’s letter is undoubtedly the most satisfactory I have received for many months. An avowal, on the outset, that the proposition held forth is not intended to go farther lengths than a kind of manifesto; and then carrying it by a majority of one only; and the day concluded with an avowal that all negotiation is at an end; give me every reason to hope that, by a firm and proper conduct, this faction will, by degrees, be deserted by many, and at length he forgot. I shall ever, with pleasure, consider that, by the prudence as well as rectitude, of one person in the House of Commons, this great change has been effected; and that he will ever be able to reflect with satisfaction that, in having supported me, he saved the constitution, the most perfect of human formation.

Evidence that the Lords were no longer prepared to support the Opposition and the incoming of petitions from all parts of the country revealing support for Pitt put a rosier complexion on the whole political situation; and although a somewhat desperate attempt to avoid dissolution by stealing the Great Seal was made a general election was ordered.

Few elections in this country have been more bitterly contested: few have had more important results. Everywhere the Foxites were on the defensive. In Town the ladies of fashion gave kisses to secure votes, and suffered a good deal of ribald chaffing into the bargain from the Cockney voters. Fox was supported by the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire; and the Prince of Wales, who was delighted to be called a ‘violent Foxite,’ wore his friend’s favours in the streets and entertained his helpers at Carlton House. Fox secured Westminster, but not without a struggle; and his own success was a poor solace for the disaster which had overtaken his friends. One hundred and sixty Foxites [a wit called them ‘Fox’s Martyrs’] were rejected at the hustings; and among

them were such eminent men as General Conway, Lord John Cavendish, Thomas Grenville and Mansfield. Head of the poll in Middlesex was the redoubtable Wilkes, who stood for ‘the Constitution, Mr Pitt and the King.’ Now he was emphatically protesting that at no time in his life had he been a Wilkite! Pitt himself topped the poll for the University of Cambridge. Tremendously pleased the King wrote to him on April 5th:

I cannot refrain from the pleasure of expressing to Mr Pitt how much his success at Cambridge has made me rejoice, as he is the highest on the return, and that Lord Euston is his colleague. This renders his election for the university a real honour, and reconciles me to his having declined Bath.

The election was more than the eclipse of the old Whig Party : it was a landmark in the development of English kingship. For seventeen years Pitt was to remain at the helm of the ship of State. His policy was dictated by his own conception of the public good. His great strength of character as a political leader precluded any attempt on the part of the monarch to interfere in the business of government, except when his own honour was concerned ; and thus it happened that George withdrew more and more into the background of the political arena, escaping much of the dust and heat of party strife and coming forward only to perform those functions which are most graciously performed by Royalty. His interest in public affairs remained as keen as ever ; but after twenty-four years he had found a politician capable of directing the nation’s life with ‘firmness’ and honesty of purpose ; and he was content with the arrangement.

* * *

GEORGE NEVER WAS reconciled to the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, 1783. He was convinced that the North American colonies might have been retained within the fabric of the Empire had the politicians pulled together like true-born Englishmen. Fox had suggested that he might receive a Minister from the United States. George’s reply was unequivocal :

As to the question whether I wish to receive a Minister from America, I certainly can never express its being agreeable to me ; and indeed I should think it wisest for both parties to have only agents who can settle any matters of commerce.

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Pitt, however, taught him that there was a better and more gracious way; and on June 1st, 1785, John Adams, destined to be the President of his country, was formally received as the American Minister by the King at St James’s Palace. Adams himself left an account of that interview.

JOHN ADAMS. Sir, The United States of America have appointed me their Minister Plenipotentiary to Your Majesty, and have directed me to deliver to Your Majesty this letter which contains evidence of it. It is in obedience to their express commands that I have the honour to assure Your Majesty of their unanimous disposition and desire to cultivate the most friendly and liberal intercourse between Your Majesty’s subjects and their citizens, and of their best wishes for Your Majesty’s health and happiness, and for that of Your Royal Family. The appointment of a Minister from the United States to Your Majesty’s Court will form an epoch in the history of England and America. I think myself more fortunate than all my fellow-citizens in having the distinguished honour to be the first to stand in Your Majesty’s royal presence in a diplomatic character; and I shall esteem myself the happiest of men if I can be instrumental in recommending my country more and more to Your Majesty’s royal benevolence, and of restoring an entire esteem, confidence, and affection, or, in better words, the old good nature and the old good-humour between people who, though separated by an Ocean and under different Governments, have the same language, a similar religion and kindred blood. . . .

THE KING. Sir, The circumstances of this audience are so extraordinary, the language you have now held is so extremely proper, and the feelings you have discovered so justly adapted to the occasion, that I must say that I not only receive with pleasure the assurance of the friendly dispositions of the United States, but I am very glad the choice has fallen upon you to be their Minister. I wish you, Sir, to believe, and that it may be understood in America, that I have done nothing in the late contest but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do, by the duty which I owed my people. I will be very frank with you. I was the last to consent to the separation; but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent Power. The moments I see such sentiments and language as yours prevail, and a disposition to give this country the preference, that moment I shall

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say, let the circumstances of language, religion and blood have their natural and full effect.

John Adams records that George was greatly moved during the audience, but his voice was firm except for a tremor when he replied to the American Minister's address. To the end of his life John Adams cherished a fond memory of the King, against whom he had rebelled.

Pitt's India Bill, which passed through Parliament without difficulty shortly after the election of 1784, gave the King the greatest satisfaction. It seemed only right to George that the Crown should control the exercise of political power in India, leaving the Directors of the East India Company free to manage their business activities; and to blame him for not seeing the defects inherent in the system of dual control is only to charge him with being true to the opinions of his own age; for it was not until 1858 that public opinion was ready to proceed with the attack on the Company's vested interests—and even then it aroused, as it had done when Fox brought forward his Bill, the bitterest controversy.

With regard to the famous attack on Warren Hastings, which dragged on from 1786 to 1795,¹ George took a line that he might reasonably have been expected to take, knowing how sincerely he disapproved of the rapacity which was daily practised in India by the Company's servants. He had thought highly of Hastings when North had recommended his appointment in 1773; and he disliked intensely Sir Philip Francis [thought to be the *Junius* of *The Letters of Junius*], whose spite was at the bottom of the charges against Hastings. But when Pitt, much to the dismay of many of his followers, voted with Burke and his fellow accusers George thoroughly approved of his action.

Mr Pitt would have conducted himself yesterday very unlike what my mind ever expects of him if, as he thinks Mr Hastings's conduct towards the Rajah was too severe, he had not taken the part he did, though it made him coincide with [the] adverse party.

At the same time George was ready to recognize that it was not 'possible in that country to carry on business with the same

¹ Hastings's actual impeachment did not begin until 1788; but it was in January 1786 that his so-called 'enormities' first engaged the attention of the House of Commons. For a full account of the attack see *Warren Hastings* by A. Mervyn Davies.

moderation that is suitable to an European civilized nation'; but, as he told Pitt nearly two years before, when applauding the progress of his India Bill through the Commons, there must be no defence of 'those shocking enormities in India that disgrace human nature.' When the time came for Hastings to be cleared of the charges which Burke had so ponderously levelled against him George was heartily glad. He was not quite certain that Hastings was altogether innocent; but the impeachment had done good, becoming a warning to others not to keep to 'the good old rule.' What did both annoy and amuse George was Burke's impassioned pleading of the indictment against Hastings: he could recall the time when the Irish Member for Malton had risen to the greatest heights of pious indignation in defending Clive against what was thought to be the 'injustice of the Court party!' And Clive's guilt was hardly for a moment in doubt.

George never shared Pitt's enthusiasm over the question of parliamentary reform. He believed that the British Constitution was 'the most perfect of human formation'; and, in his opinion, therefore, there was no real need to tamper with the system of representation by giving, as Pitt proposed, a larger number of members to London and the more populous counties. At the same time, he was not disposed to argue Pitt out of his decision.

Mr Pitt must recollect [he wrote] that though I have ever thought it unfortunate that he had early engaged himself in this measure, yet that I have ever said that as he was clear of the propriety of the measure he ought to lay his thoughts before the House. That, out of personal regard to him, I would avoid giving any opinion to any one on the opening of the door to the Parliamentary Reform except to him, therefore I am certain Mr Pitt cannot suspect my having influenced any one on the occasion. If others choose, for base ends, to impute such conduct to me, I must bear it as former false suggestions. Indeed on a question of such magnitude I should think very ill of any man who took part on either side without the maturest consideration, and who would suffer his civility to any one to make him vote contrary to his opinion.

It is clear that the opponents of reform had resorted to the old dodge of giving out that the King personally was opposed to Pitt's proposals. No doubt George was not displeased when the Bill was negatived in the Commons in April 1785; but, there again, his views were those of the majority of his subjects; and

had he been convinced that parliamentary reform would bring greater happiness to the country then there is little doubt that he would have given it his unqualified support.

* * *

THE STRENUOUS LIFE which George lived, fraught as it was with public and private worries,¹ seriously undermined his constitution; and in the summer of 1788 he suffered severely from what was thought to be nothing worse than biliousness. On June 12th he wrote to Pitt from Kew:

A pretty smart bilious attack prevents my coming this day to town. I am certainly better than yesterday, and if it goes on mending this day, I shall hope to see Mr Pitt in town to-morrow. Sir George Baker approves of what I have done, and I trust his advice will remove the remains of this complaint. On returning home from the review I was forced to take to my bed, as the only tolerable posture I could find. To be sure I am what one calls a cup too low, but when thoroughly cleared I hope to feel fully equal to any business that may occur.

Sir George Baker, his physician, deserves our sympathy: the King had his own remedies for everything, and was tantalizingly disrespectful of medical advice in its orthodox forms.

Baker nevertheless persuaded the King to go to Cheltenham 'to take the waters,' and also to keep him 'free from certain fatigues that attend long audiences.' The change did George much good; and while he was at Cheltenham he went about a great deal. For example, one day he visited 'the clothing country near Stroud.' In a letter to Pitt he said it was 'the most beautiful sight I ever saw': the factories were working at top pressure, and none of the oldest inhabitants could recall better times. He returned to Town convinced that he was completely cured; but in October he suffered another 'spasm' which confined him to his bed, and necessitated Baker's attention. But George would not do what he was told: as soon as he felt more or less himself he was up and about his normal work, and even taxed his strength by riding hard to hounds in the Windsor country. One day while out hunting he was soaked to the skin; and on his return he sat about the house in his wet clothes, with the result that he contracted a serious chill.

¹ The King's private troubles will be dealt with in Chapter X.

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The state of the King’s health caused considerable anxiety in the City. Stocks fell; and the feeling of insecurity, which Sydney commented on in a letter written in November, existed long before it was known that the illness had taken a serious turn.

People in general [said Sydney], of all ranks, seem to be truly sensible of the calamitous effects to be dreaded from an unfavourable termination of His Majesty’s disorder.

And well might people feel uneasy; for the indecent rejoicings which were a nightly feature of life at Brooks’s did not presage a period of orderly government, should by any misfortune the Prince of Wales come to the throne. It was widely known that messengers had been sent to recall Fox, who was touring the Continent with Mrs Armstead, and that the Prince had promised to send Pitt about his business at the earliest moment.

George was aware of the awful uncertainty which prevailed in the City; and October 24th he held a Drawing Room, as he confessed to Pitt, ‘to stop further lies and any fall of the Stocks.’ It was a brave act, for George was desperately ill at the time. He was not too ill to take the liveliest interest in Scandinavian affairs. To Pitt on October 25th he wrote:

But that nothing may be delayed by my present situation, I authorize Mr Pitt to acquaint the Cabinet that though I can never think whether Sweden is governed by a corrupt King or a corrupt Senate a subject worthy risking the being drawn into a war, yet that if they wish to hold any language [that is never meant to be followed up to these dreadful lengths] which may perhaps tend to keep Sweden in its present situation, I do not object to it.

Pitt at once hastened to inform the King that he was hopeful that war would be avoided.

On November 3rd he penned one of his last letters for many weeks to his Prime Minister.

The King thinks it must give Mr Pitt pleasure to receive a line from him. This will convince him that the King can sign warrants without inconvenience: therefore he desires any that are ready may be sent, and he has no objection to receiving any large number . . . and shall sign them at his leisure. He attempts reading the dispatches daily, but as yet without success; but he eats well, sleeps well, and is not in the least now fatigued with riding, though he cannot yet stand long and is fatigued if he walks.

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Some days later, like a terrible nightmare, there came to the poor man the feeling that he was going out of his senses. He begged God to take him before that awful fate overwhelmed him. There was great consternation in the household. The Prince of Wales hastened to see for himself whether or not the rumours were true; and when he met his father a most distressing incident occurred. Seizing the Prince by the throat the King forced his eldest son back against a wall, and only with difficulty was he persuaded to release his grip. Doctors hurried to his side, but they were powerless to minister to him, and for hours on end the wretched man talked and talked and talked. It was, according to Miss Burney, Colonel Digby who eventually persuaded the King to go to bed.

THE KING : I will not go. Who are you?

DIGBY : I am Colonel Digby, Sir. Your Majesty has been very good to me often, and now I am going to be very good to you, for you must come to bed. It is necessary to your life.

Gently Digby led him to his bed-chamber.

Then the true extent of the King's popularity with his people was revealed. Men met in churches, chapels and even synagogues to pray for his recovery. The royal doctors were threatened with the direst consequences should their patient fail to get well. Respectful crowds hung about the palace, waiting to hear the latest news and hoping that it would be good news. The news went from London over the country; and in quiet villages and hamlets men and women spoke in hushed whispers about the misfortune which had descended upon a King whom they had never seen but whom they knew as a true-born Briton.

This silent tribute of sympathy and affection was in marked contrast to the behaviour of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. At Windsor, according to Miss Burney, the Prince ruled the roost in a most offensive manner.

Nothing was done but by his orders, and he was applied to in every difficulty. The Queen interfered not in anything. She lived entirely in her two new rooms, and spent the day in patient sorrow and retirement with her daughters.

Had the Prince been there as a dutiful son, anxious to ease the burdens of the mother who idolized him, his interference would

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have been most proper; but the ugly fact remains that he was at Windsor to watch and wait for that moment when Death should bestow upon him a kingdom.

A few days ago Mrs Richard Walpole gave a supper to the two Princes, Mrs Fitzherbert, Colonel Fullarton, Jack Payne—who is such a favourite he is to be a Lord of the Admiralty, and leans on the Prince as he walks, not the Prince on him—Miss Vanneck, and a few others. The Duchess of Gordon the only Pittite. The Prince says—“What a fine fellow my brother York is! He never forsakes me. The other day, when we went to look for the King’s money, jewels, &c., at Kew, as we opened the drawers my mother looked very uneasy and grew angry. Says York to her, ‘Madam, I believe you are as much deranged as the King.’” Then says Jack Payne—after a great many invectives against Mr Pitt—calling him William the Fourth, William the Conqueror, &c.—“Mr Pitt’s chastity will protect the Queen,” which was received by all present as a very good thing.

The Duchess of Gordon, however, told the company that she would leave the room unless they ceased to abuse the Queen.

That was gossip, but it is hard to believe that it was not without some foundation. Lord Grenville averred that the Prince had the callousness to take his friends to see his royal father raving in his dementia.

Think of the Prince of Wales introducing Lord Lothian into the King’s room when it was darkened, in order that he might hear his ravings at the time that they were at the worst!

People who could easily have forgiven the Prince his natural vices were disgusted by his complete absence of sympathy and unfilial behaviour.

How was the situation to be dealt with? That was Pitt’s problem. It was quite obvious that the regular doctors in attendance at the Palace were baffled by the disease. It was to them insanity, and called for the rough and brutal treatment which medical science then prescribed for the treatment of lunatics. It is distressing to learn that a straight-waistcoat was introduced and that force was often used to compel the royal patient to obey his doctors’ orders. That the King suffered from a very serious form of mental derangement is undeniable; but it was not such

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as to call for such drastic treatment. Colonel Digby, who remained for long periods with the sufferer, records :

The highest panegyric that could be formed of his character would not equal what in those moments showed itself; that, with his heart and mind entirely open, not one wrong idea appeared; that all was benevolence, charity, rectitude, love of country, and anxiety for its welfare.

At last there appeared in the sick chamber a man who held views on the treatment of mental disorders very different from those of contemporary medical men. He was Dr Francis Willis, the Rector of Wapping, who had a private asylum in Lincolnshire, and enjoyed a deservedly great reputation as a brain specialist. Two of his sons accompanied him, and a new treatment was prescribed. The old restraints were abandoned: the King was permitted to shave himself and given books to read. He was even allowed to see the Queen and his younger children.

In the meantime, however, the illness was being hotly discussed in Parliament. On December 8th, 1788, Pitt moved that a parliamentary committee should be appointed to examine the doctors in whose charge the King had been or still was. It was Pitt's method of meeting the claims of the Opposition that the Prince of Wales should be appointed Regent during his father's illness.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales [argued Fox] had as clear and express a right to assume the reins of government, and to take upon him the sovereign authority during the continuance of the King's illness, as if His Majesty had suffered a natural demise.

In examination the doctors all agreed that there was hope of recovery for the King, though there were differences of opinion as to how long the disorder might last.

Pitt thereupon made the next move: he asked Parliament to set up another committee to inquire into precedents for a regency and the form which it ought to take. The Opposition made a great outcry against such a procedure, even going to the length of defending what was virtually the doctrine of Divine Right—a doctrine which was anathema to all good Whigs! Pitt allowed the Opposition to blunder on with arguments which were so contrary to the tenets of the party to which they professed to belong. The result is nicely revealed in Grenville's account of the proceedings in a letter to a friend:

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Only think of Fox’s want of judgement to bring himself and his friends into such a scrape as he has done, by maintaining a doctrine of higher Tory principles than could have been found since Sir Robert Sawyer’s speeches! . . . Fox found that by what he had said before, he had offended so many people, that he was obliged to take the first moment of explaining it away. After this recantation was over the day was closed by such a blunder of Sheridan’s as I never knew any man of the meanest talent guilty of before.

Sheridan’s blunder was to warn the House of ‘the danger of provoking the Prince to assert his right!’ As a matter of fact Loughborough [Wedderburn of old] even urged the Prince to attempt a *coup d'état*, assuring him that he would be within his rights to take such drastic action.

Pitt went blithely on with his plans. He was not averse to a regency, but he was resolutely determined that the Regent should not only derive his authority from, but that his powers should be definitely circumscribed by, Parliament. In the Lords Thurlow supported him, speaking with his tongue in his cheek; for he had been in touch with Sheridan and was prepared to go over to the Opposition provided that he was allowed to retain the Wool-sack. Nevertheless, his speech in defence of Pitt’s plan was a fighting one, which carried considerable weight among the peers. It closed dramatically with the words :

When I forget my sovereign may God forget me!

Wilkes who had gone to the upper House to listen to the debate said in a whisper which carried over the chamber :

God forget you! He will see you damned first!

And Pitt, who was only too painfully aware of the part which Thurlow had recently played with the Opposition, left the House murmuring :

Oh, what a rascal! What a rascal! What a rascal!

When Speaker Cornwall died on January 2nd, 1789, the Opposition believed that Pitt was checkmated. The new Speaker could only be confirmed in his office by the King—or his Regent; and until he was confirmed the House of Commons would have no legal standing. But Pitt reminded the House that at the

Restoration in 1660 and at the Revolution in 1688 the Speaker had been appointed without royal sanction; and fortified by these precedents he carried the House with him. In vain did the Prince himself protest against what he described as undignified treatment at Pitt's hands: the Prime Minister courteously informed him that his sole desire was to uphold the honour and dignity of the Prince's father!

Maddened by the way in which Pitt had out-maneuvred them the Opposition resorted to dirtier tactics. It was hinted that the Queen and Willis were acting in collusion to prevent the Prince from having his just rights: the King, it was said, was incurably mad, but the fact was being kept from the nation. When Pitt rose in his place on January 16th to detail the proposals of the Government for the limitation of the Regent's power he hurled himself furiously against the Queen's traducers. She was a lady

who had lived for almost thirty years in this country without blame of any kind, a pattern of domestic tenderness and virtue, against whom the breath of calumny had not dared to send forth even a whisper, and who could merit it least of all at a moment when visited by the heaviest afflictions.

Scorn was wasted on the Opposition. During the debates on the Regency Bill the most extravagant language was used. Burke, for example, referred to the King as 'having been by the Almighty hurled from his throne'; and in ponderous periods inveighed against 'the treason' of the Prime Minister. At Brooks's they were busily engaged in drawing up the new Ministry; and the ladies of the Opposition donned 'Regency Caps,' which cost anything from seven guineas upwards.

The Bill passed the Commons on February 12th: on the 17th and 18th it was discussed in Committee in the Lords. But already the King was on the road to recovery. On February 2nd Miss Burney had met him out in the grounds of Kew: although his speech was nervously rapid it was quite clear that he was much better. On the 16th, to the joy of the Household, it was reported that the King and Queen had taken a walk in Richmond Gardens; and on the 19th Pitt could write to his mother to the effect that the King was practically well.

The public account this morning [he said] is that the King continues advancing in recovery. The private one is that he is to all appear-

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ance perfectly well, and if it were the case of a private man, would be immediately declared so.

On the following day Thurlow visited the King: he paid him another visit two days later. His report was that

he never saw, at any period, the King more composed, collected, or distinct, and that there was not the least trace or appearance of disorder.

The news of the King’s recovery created great consternation in the Opposition camp. On the 23rd the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York were invited to see their father. Wrote Grenville:

The two Princes were at Kew yesterday, and saw the King in the Queen’s apartment. She was present the whole time, a precaution for which, God knows, there was but too much reason. They kept him waiting a considerable time before they arrived, and after they left him drove immediately to Mrs Armstead’s, in Park Street, in hopes of finding Fox there, to give him an account of what had passed. He not being in town they amused themselves yesterday evening with spreading about a report that the King was still out of his mind, and in quoting phrases of his, to which they gave that turn.

But Pitt was at Kew on the same day.

I was with the King [he said] above an hour. . . . There was not the smallest trace or appearance of any disorder. His manner was unusually composed and dignified, but there was no other difference whatever from what I had been used to see. The King spoke of his disorder as of a thing past, and which had left no other impression on his mind than that of gratitude for his recovery, and a sense of what he owed to those who had stood by him. He spoke of these in such a manner as brought tears into his eyes, but with that degree of affection of mind there was not the least appearance of disorder.

On March 10th Parliament was informed that the King was completely restored to health, and able to conduct the business of State.

The disappointment of the Opposition was lost in the tremendous rejoicing which took place in London, when the news was known. Nathaniel Wraxall relates:

London displayed a blaze of light from one extremity to the other; the illuminations extending, without any metaphor, from Hamp-

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stead and Highgate to Clapham, and even as far as Tooting ; while the vast distance between Greenwich and Kensington presented the same dazzling appearance. The poorest mechanics contributed their proportion, and instances were exhibited of cobblers' stall decorated with one or two farthing candles.

The Queen took her young family to witness this magnificent display of loyalty. They did not return to Kew until two in the morning ; and there was the King waiting to welcome them. The Queen incidentally scolded him for not being in bed, but he replied that he could not possibly retire until he knew that she and the children were safe. After all there was no knowing what mischief was being concocted in Brooks's ; but for the moment it was not safe for the Opposition champions to appear in the streets ; and those costly 'Regency Caps' were quickly relegated to the wardrobe.

On April 23rd London was again *en fête*. The King was going in state publicly to render thanks to his God for his recovery. Accompanying him were the Queen, members of his Family, the great Officers of State, Lords and Commons ; and as the procession wended its way through the streets to St Paul's a mighty roar of cheering went up. At the door of the cathedral he was met by Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, and George Pretyman, Bishop of Lincoln and Dean of St Paul's ; and as they entered the building five thousand children sang the hundredth psalm. Overcome with emotion George turned to Dr Porteus and said :

I now feel that I have been ill.

Tears of joy bedewed many cheeks that day ; but George, the centre of all attention, played his part like a true king. According to all account the Prince of Wales was in a bad temper : his welcome in the streets had been cold, and even hostile ; and in marked contrast to that given to his royal father and Pitt.

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A LONG HOLIDAY at Weymouth with the Queen and their younger children, enlivened by plenty of sea-bathing and numerous excursions by land and sea, completed the cure; and when George returned to Town in September 1789 he was in the best of health and spirits. It gave him great satisfaction to see the loyalty manifested by his people: it was a generous reward for all his labours in their behalf in the past. ‘God Save the King’ was the tune of the moment: they danced to it in fashionable homes; it was sung lustily before and after the play or opera; the urchins whistled it in the streets. While the King was in residence at Weymouth a party of fiddlers even hired a bathing machine, and had it wheeled into the sea so that they could play ‘God Save the King’ as George took his daily plunge! There was a profusion of bunting and loyal colours: indeed when bathing at Weymouth one invariably wore a costume of red, white and blue! And from the King’s point of view it was all very pleasant.

With his accustomed keenness George followed the events taking place on the other side of the Channel. He was not sorry to find that Louis XVI had been compelled to summon a meeting of the States General, for he held that no country was free unless it possessed representative institutions; but when he saw that the Revolution was getting out of hand, and learnt of the extravagant activities of the French demagogues, his sentiments underwent a great change; and he was immediately drawn to the side of reaction by his natural appreciation for law and order. Miss Burney relates how in April 1790 he discussed the French situation with General Grenville, lately come out of France.

He conversed [she wrote] . . . in a manner so unaffected, open and manly—so highly superior to all despotic principles even while

condemning the unlicensed fury of the Parisian mob—that I wished all the nations of the world to have heard him, that they might have known the existence of a patriot King.

It was the kind of behaviour one would expect of George. He was then, as he was throughout his long life, a constant believer in ‘firmness’ in government; but he was never a despot in the way that the King of France or the King of Prussia was a despot.

He had the Britisher’s horror of revolution. Somehow or other it seemed so unsportsmanlike to take bloody vengeance on those politically opposed to you, no matter how violently you might execrate their opinions. And all the French talk about equality and fraternity was out of place in a land like England where men owned property on a large scale. It was only irresponsible men like Fox and his friends who could applaud the fall of the Bastille or the compulsory removal of the French King and Queen from Versailles to the Tuileries: the bulk of the nation shared George’s view that they were dastardly acts performed by a licentious people. With infinite satisfaction George witnessed the collapse of Fox’s party. Old enemies arrayed themselves on the Government’s side; and Fox and a handful of faithful followers alone remained to applaud in the most extravagant language the new revolutionary spirit which had come to the lands of Western Europe. Their efforts, however, were singularly unsuccessful. It is true that numerous revolutionary Societies and Associations sprung up in England and Wales in the years immediately following the outbreak of revolution in France; but the impassioned preaching and teaching of Wesley and Whitefield had already enslaved in a higher cause the discontented workers of the newly-developed industrial centres; and ‘republicanism’ was left to become the solace of political poseurs and reckless hooligans. Burke, once a stalwart of the Foxite Whigs, assumed the role of a thorough-going reactionary in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* which was issued in October 1790: he even went so far as to urge war against the French revolutionaries, whose lawless doctrines were, in his view, so subversive to the natural order of things.

The King and Pitt were agreed that disorder at home must be sharply suppressed. The publication of inflammatory articles in newspapers and pamphlets was prohibited by royal proclamation: orders were issued to the magistrates to deal promptly with all

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outbreaks of civil disorder. Friend and foe were to be treated alike: for in George's view there was no excuse for riot and mob rule. Thus when a Birmingham mob attacked Dr Joseph Priestley's house in Fairhill, because it was known that he meant to attend a dinner organized by the local democrats to celebrate the second anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, George at once approved the steps which the Home Secretary [Dundas] had taken to restore order. In a letter written to Dundas by the King on July 16th, 1791, this was made very clear.

Though I cannot but feel better pleased that Priestley is the sufferer for the doctrines he and his party have instilled, and that the people see them in their true light, yet I cannot approve their having employed such atrocious means of showing their discontent.

Difficult though the times were the King had great satisfaction from the knowledge that he was served by a team of Ministers who had the interests of the nation at heart. His confidence in the Administration was noticed by Baron Auckland, the Minister at The Hague, who wrote to a kinsman in December 1791:

He is most steadfastly attached to his Ministers. As long as he remains so well, the tranquillity of this country is on a rock, for the public prosperity is great and the nation is right-minded, and the commerce and resources are increasing.

Strangely enough Pitt had not always acted in accord with his sovereign's wishes. He had supported, for example, a Bill to relieve Catholics from the disabilities which they suffered under the Test Act: he had spoken in favour of allowing Dissenters more freedom in the exercise of their worship than the strict letter of the law allowed. Both were measures which George thought to be highly 'dangerous' to the interests of the State and 'true religion.' But he was enthusiastic for Wilberforce's measure to abolish slavery—a measure which was supported by Pitt in a speech which left the House of Commons spellbound at the grandeur of his oratory. George was not going to quarrel with his Prime Minister over these differences of opinion: during the whole of their association he was convinced that Pitt's actions were determined solely to benefit his country. He was particularly anxious to bestow some mark of favour upon him. On December 12th, 1790, he wrote to 'remind' Pitt that he had 'offered him one of the vacancies' in the Order of the Garter.

He was a little disappointed when Pitt refused the honour ; but, as George admitted, the refusal was done ‘ in so handsome a manner that I cannot help expressing my sensibility ’ ; and he readily conferred the Garter at Pitt’s request on his brother Chatham, believing that ‘ this public testimony of approbation . . . will be understood as meant to the whole family.’ When North [he was now Earl of Guildford] died on August 5th, 1792, the King saw an opportunity of bestowing upon Pitt a favour which would help to relieve his many financial embarrassments. On the following day he wrote :

Having this morning received the account of the death of the Earl of Guildford, I take the first opportunity of acquainting Mr Pitt that the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports is an office for which I will not receive any recommendations, having positively resolved to confer it on him as a mark of that regard which his eminent services have deserved from me. I am so bent on this, that I shall be seriously offended at any attempt to decline.

Done, as Pitt said to his friend George Rose, ‘ in the handsomest way possible ’ he could not refuse the King’s favour, though when he wrote to Wilberforce two days later he was still doubtful whether he had done right.

The real extent of the King’s admission of gratitude to Pitt is to be seen in his willingness to dismiss Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, in the summer of 1792. George thought highly of Thurlow, and believed that he was one of his staunchest supporters. He was aware, however, that Pitt found him an awkward colleague to work with ; and on more than one occasion he had done his best to compose their differences. Thurlow, it would appear, traded upon his friendship with the King, and was inclined to treat Pitt disrespectfully. So the Prime Minister resolved to deal with the refractory Lord Chancellor in the only way possible to preserve harmony in the Cabinet—he asked the King to dismiss Thurlow. George made a last attempt to save his friend ; but Pitt was adamant. Either Thurlow or he must go : there was no other way. Poor Thurlow was completely taken aback when he received the news that the King had no further use for his services. To John Scott [later Earl of Eldon] he said :

I did not think that the King would have parted with me so easily !

Time had mellowed the King considerably. He no longer cherished those bitter animosities which were so inextricably bound up with the system of party politics in his reign; and in December 1791 Auckland could write that ‘he [the King] speaks, even of those who are opposed to his government, with complacency, and without a sneer or acrimony.’ At the same time he was by no means sure that the time was ripe for a broadening of the basis of the Cabinet by admitting into the nation’s councils men who had belonged to the Whig Party, but who now were supporters of the Government. It was admittedly a time when all men, irrespective of party ties, ought to pull together; but he could not easily see that such a sentiment of loyalty depended in any way upon the sharing of the administrative power.

Pitt, on the other hand, was bent upon a coalition; and once again George deferred to his Prime Minister’s judgement. For some time Pitt had been in negotiation with Loughborough, representing the Opposition groups in Parliament. Pitt assured him that ‘it was his wish to unite cordially and heartily, not in the way of bargain, but to form a strong and united Ministry.’ He confessed that he was in some difficulty with regard to Fox, ‘who he was afraid had gone too far’; but so far as he personally was concerned he was ready to welcome Fox as a colleague in the Cabinet provided that Fox would accept the condition which underlay the basis of such a coalition—the desire ‘to form a strong and united Ministry.’ Loughborough was even authorized to tell his Opposition friends that the King was willing to bury the hatchet, but could not, as a result of Fox’s language during recent debates in the House, consent to his [Fox’s] appointment as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs [the office which Loughborough claimed for himself] ‘till after the lapse of a few months.’

The negotiations broke down. Fox, while he could admit that the formation of a coalition was ‘so damned right a thing that it must be done,’ distrusted Pitt. He could not believe that his opponent was sincere. Can it be that he was afraid that in any coalition he would be completely overshadowed by so remarkable a man? Fox’s friends were in a quandary—particularly Portland, who knowing in his heart of hearts that it was his duty publicly to separate himself from Fox and the extremist Whigs, hesitated to take such a step, as he said, out of ‘private affection and attachment to Mr Fox.’ His followers by no means appreciated his

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feelings: even the Prince of Wales wrote to tell him that he intended 'to join the Government.'

I had nothing particular to say, neither have I now, except that the Opposition, as lately called, seems suspended in a comical state, the Duke of Portland adhering to Charles Fox, and all the party, except a very select few, opposing the said Charles.

Such was the observation made by John Baker Holroyd, Earl of Sheffield, to Auckland in February 1793.

But by then the war clouds which had gathered in the European skies in the previous months cast their dread shadow over Great Britain. The King and Pitt had done their best to avoid war. In his Speech to Parliament at the close of the session on June 15th, 1792, the former had said:

I have seen with great concern the commencement of hostilities in different parts of Europe. In the present situation of affairs it will be my principal care to maintain that harmony and good understanding which subsists between me and the several belligerent powers, and to preserve to my people the uninterrupted blessings of peace; and the assurances which I receive from all quarters of a friendly disposition towards this country, afford me the pleasant hope of succeeding in these endeavours.

But the intrepid Frenchmen had killed their King, and were marching against Flanders and Holland to preach Liberty, Fraternity and Equality. The danger was coming perilously near Great Britain; and it was a situation which created the greatest alarm. The Frenchmen themselves cut the Gordian knot on February 1st, 1793, when they declared war on their ancient enemy and Holland. And on that very day Fox was on his feet in the House of Commons protesting that there was nothing in the conduct of France to justify Great Britain declaring war upon her! Unaware of the recent march of events in France George himself was convinced that war, which he so much detested, could not long be averted. On February 2nd he wrote to Pitt:

. . . if the occasion ever could occur that every power for the preservation of society must stand forth in opposition to France, the necessity seems to be at the present hour. Indeed my natural sentiments are so strong for peace, that no event of less moment than the present could have made me of decidedly of opinion that

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duty as well as interest calls on us to join against that most savage as well as unprincipled nation.

But once war was embarked upon George was heart and soul in it, because his country's honour, which meant so much to him, was at stake, and no sacrifice was too great to vindicate it.

War lays heavy burdens on the backs of kings. They are made to stand forth as symbols of national unity against the enemies of their realms: they must encourage and admire the sacrifices which are demanded from their subjects: they must accept with dignity both victory and defeat. Thus George on February 26th performed his first duty in a war which was destined to continue almost without intermission for twenty-two years. In St James's Park he reviewed three battalions of the Guards; and afterwards, with members of his family, accompanied the soldiers to Greenwich to witness their embarkation under the command of his second son, the Duke of York, for Holland. There was great excitement in London River that day; and the King shared that peculiar enthusiasm which the British people have for war once they have embarked upon it. Many times in the next few years George was called upon to witness the departure of his soldiers overseas.

Triumphs and disappointments came to George in 1794. The victory which Admiral Lord Howe had gained over the French fleet on June 1st was joyously acclaimed throughout the land. It gave the King particular satisfaction, for he liked to call Howe his 'peculiar Admiral'; and not only did he write at once to the victor's wife and sister letters of congratulation, but on June 26th, accompanied by the Queen, Prince Ernest and three of his daughters, he travelled to Portsmouth personally to thank Howe for his gallant services to his country and present him with a diamond-studded sword. The royal party was entertained on the Admiral's flagship, *The Queen Charlotte*; and at the dinner the King proposed the toast to Howe. Nor did he forget the gallant fellows who had fought with the Admiral on that never-to-be-forgotten day; and before he left the flagship he walked through ranks of sailors and expressed himself in the most gracious terms when he heard from their commander that 'their diligence and propriety of conduct, in all respects, since the victory, was not less commendable than their resolution and bravery during the action.'

Pitt had at last succeeded in putting his Administration ‘on a broad bottom.’ Loughborough was made Lord Chancellor, the Great Seal having been in commission since Thurlow’s dismissal. The Presidency of the Council, vacant in consequence of Camden’s death, went to Earl FitzWilliam; and the retirement of Granville Leveson-Gower from the office of Lord Privy Seal made room for Earl Spencer. Portland, after some further hesitation, accepted the Home Secretaryship and was promised the Garter. George in a letter written to Pitt on July 13th said :

I cannot see why on the Duke of Portland’s head favours are to be heaped without measure.

He was quite ready loyally to accept the ministerial changes, but he could not for the life of him understand why such a fuss was being made of Portland: if the Duke had only the courage of his convictions he would have severed his connection with Fox and joined the Government long ago. On the other hand, George was delighted to bestow as a mark of his favour a pension of £1200 a year [‘being the largest sum which His Majesty is enabled to fix’] on the ailing Burke or, if he preferred, on Mrs Burke. It was a very humble—one might almost say obsequious—Burke who conveyed his thanks to Pitt:

You will be so kind [he wrote] as to lay me, with all possible humility, duty, and gratitude, at His Majesty’s feet, and to express my deep and heart-felt sense of His Majesty’s bounty and beneficence, and the gracious condescension with which His Majesty has been pleased to distinguish me. . . . In some instances of my public conduct I might have erred. Few have been so long [and in times and matters so arduous and critical] engaged in affairs, who can be certain that they have never made a mistake. But I am certain that my intentions have been always pure with regard to the Crown and to the country.

Poor Burke’s only regret that ‘bodily infirmity’ and ‘broken state of mind’ made it impossible ‘to demonstrate the sincerity of my humble gratitude by future active service.’

Things had not gone well with the British forces fighting in the Low Countries. They were hampered by indifferent allies and were not particularly well led. The latter criticism touched the King nearly, for his second son, the Duke of York, was their commander; and it had given the Royal Family infinite satis-

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faction to know that one of them was playing an important part in the war. In fairness to York it must be admitted that he had diligently applied himself to the business of a soldier; but he was too young and not sufficiently strong in character to exert his authority over hard-bitten senior officers; and the whole campaign had suffered from the lack of a unified command. In September Pitt could write to his brother Chatham :

The accounts from Flanders continue, as you see, very unfavourable; and though the Duke of York's retreat was, I believe, perfectly necessary, there is more and more reason to fear that his general management is what the army has no confidence in, and while that is the case there is little chance of setting things right.

York had been driven back behind the Meuse, and was separated from his allies: the French forces were swarming over the southern part of Holland. On October 3rd George wrote to his son—he was, despite his brief association with the Prince of Wales, a favourite son—a letter of encouragement:

I have not wrote [he said] since the reception of yours on having been obliged to cross the Meuse, which though a very unpleasant movement seems to have been necessary. If I would give vent to my feelings on the supine conduct of the Dutch my pen would never stop. . . . Keep up your spirits: remember that difficulties are the time that show the energy of character and as the rest of Europe seems blind to the evils that await the unprosperous conclusions of this business, it is my duty and that of my country by the greatest exertion to attempt to save Europe and society itself.

It came as a great blow to the King when Pitt wrote to say that York must be recalled. George replied at once [November 24th]:

Mr Pitt cannot be surprised at my being very hurt at the contents of his letter. Indeed he seems to expect it, but I am certain that nothing but the thinking it his duty could have instigated him to give me so severe a blow. I am neither in a situation of mind nor from inclination inclined to enter more minutely into every part of his letter; but I am fully ready to answer the material part, namely, that though loving very much my son, and not forgetting how he saved the Republic of Holland in 1793, and that his endeavours to be of service have never abated, and that to the conduct of Austria, the faithlessness of Prussia, and the cowardice of the Dutch, every failure is easily to be accounted for without laying blame on him

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who deserved a better fate, I shall certainly now not think it safe for him to continue in the command on the Continent, when every one seems to conspire to render his situation hazardous either by propagating unfounded complaints against him or giving credit to them. No one will believe that I take this step but reluctantly, and the more so since no successor of note is proposed to take the command.

As York's successor Pitt had in mind Charles, Marquis Cornwallis, who had atoned for his failures in North America [he had capitulated at Yorktown in 1781] by a brilliant career in India; and although the Prime Minister has often been charged with making a scapegoat of the King's son in order to save his own face it must be remembered that York himself had let it be known that if any objection 'were taken to his military command the Ministers were on no account to defend him at their own expense.'

* * *

IN THE FESTERED womb of war were planted the seeds of those scourges which destroy the hope of warring peoples—insensate slaughter of the nation's youth, unbearable burdens of taxation, rising prices and scarcity of the necessities of life, the suppression of opinions. Great Britain experienced all these evils in the seventeen-nineties. The activities of the recruiting sergeants and the horrors perpetrated in their infamous crimping houses infuriated townsmen and countrymen alike; the rapidly rising scale of taxes, lightening as it did the purses of squires and merchants, reacted upon the prices of commodities; the scarcity of food drove men and women crazed with hunger to riot and disorder; and the suppression of opinions was carried through by a system of coercion, the like of which the country had not known since the abolition of the Star Chamber and Court of the High Commission.

The most damaging criticism which can be levelled against Pitt's Administration is that it crushed with ruthless ferocity the free expression of opinions. To-day the measures which were introduced for this purpose seem so unnecessary: in the seventeen-nineties, in the view of the Government, they were essential for the safety of the State. In ministerial circles there was a fear that a great underground conspiracy was on foot to overthrow the Constitution by employing the same disgraceful methods as

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Frenchmen had used in overthrowing and killing their King and Queen. The existence of such a conspiracy was vouched for by a secret parliamentary committee which had been set up to examine the problem : the feeling of insecurity was heightened by the extravagant language of men like Fox and Erskine who one moment were boasting of their friendships with French regicides and the next seriously advocating parliamentary reform. In the famous State trials of the period the prosecution invariably told the tale of a connection with foreign revolutionary associations ; and although judges and juries were not always easily convinced by the prosecution's arguments the vast majority of Britishers were ready to acquiesce in the Government's policy of coercion because they thought it to be preferable to 'the terror of the French regicides and democrats.' Readers will recall the introduction of D.O.R.A. during the Great War of 1914-18 : we chafed under those incursions into our liberty, but we suffered them cheerfully enough because we believed that they were a bulwark against German domination.

In the seventeen-nineties it became impossible to dissociate the genuine reform movements from revolutionary activities. The majority of the so-called 'revolutionary' associations were legitimate societies formed to demand such reforms as annual parliaments, the payment of members, the disfranchisement of 'rotten' boroughs, the redistribution of seats ; but too often the men associated with these movements demonstrated by word or deed their sympathy with the French revolutionary movement ; and this fact was allowed to obscure everything else. In normal times little exception would have been taken to such societies as *The Friends of the People*, *The Revolution Society*,¹ *The London Corresponding Society*, and *The Society for Constitutional Information* ; but the Government's arguments were that the times were not normal and that their existence therefore was hurtful to the national safety. Fate cast Pitt, who had been one of the most constructive champions of parliamentary reform, in the role of a bitter opponent : it played the same trick on George, who did not share to the same extent Pitt's reformist enthusiasm. The society to which they both now looked for salvation was *The Association for Preserving Liberty and Property* or, to give it its more popular name, *The Crown and Anchor Association*, which

¹ The 'Revolution' was that of 1688.

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taught its members to believe that what was good enough for their fathers was good enough for them. It set out to reconcile two things which a Marxian would say are irreconcilable—property and liberty: but Britishers have always liked to think of them as identical; and at no time was this belief more widely held to than in those hectic days when the ‘Frenchies’ and ‘Boney’ were threatening to enslave the British race.

It was all very well for the Government to be cursed for its policy of coercion, and for men to say that these societies were harmless bodies, when words and deeds appeared conclusively to prove the contrary. For example, during the State trials which took place in 1794 one of the accused was alleged to have said:

For my part I do not wish the King or any of his family to lose their lives, but I think they might go to Hanover. As to other persons it must be expected that some blood will be shed.

In the same trial the prosecution put in as proof of treason a playbill found in the possessions of the prisoners. It announced

A NEW AND ENTERTAINING FARCE
CALLED
LA GUILLOTINE
OR
GEORGE'S HEAD IN A BASKET
VIVE LA LIBERTÉ! VIVE LA REPUBLIQUE!

This sort of thing was very frightening to say the least of it.

The King could not escape from the inconveniences which were occasioned by the unrest of the times. As early as January 1790, as he was on his way to open Parliament, a large stone was hurled into the royal coach. It turned out to have been thrown by a crazed army officer, John Frith, who was promptly sent to Bedlam; but even then at the back of some people's minds was the suspicion that Frith's act was connected with the ‘revolutionaries’ about whom every one talked in rather hushed whispers. The attack which was made on the King in October 1795 was a much more sinister and dangerous affair. The evil effects of the war were beginning to be felt in every home: the situation was aggravated by a bad harvest, resulting in a sharp rise in the price of wheat. In St James's Park a great crowd of people was

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assembled, and the route from Buckingham House to Westminster was lined with discontented men and women. As Lords and Commons made their way to Westminster they were greeted with hisses and cat-calls, curses and threats ; and from thousands of lusty throats went up the cries of ‘Bread !’ ‘Bread !’ ‘Bread !’ ‘Peace !’ ‘Peace !’ ‘Peace !’ ‘Down with Pitt !’ ‘Down with Pitt !’ As the royal coach came along the people surged round it. Fists were thrust in the King’s face ; threats were uttered ; and on passing Whitehall he was fired on. His calm courage was the envy of his companions ; and without a trace of excitement in his voice he read the Speech from the Throne to the assembled Parliament. There was a good deal of discussion as to the wisdom of returning through that angry throng ; but George was never afraid of his people. To two of his attendants he said as he was entering his coach for the return journey :

Well, my Lords, one person is proposing this, and another is supposing that, forgetting that there is One above us all who disposes of everything, and on whom alone we depend !

The appearance of the royal coach coming out of the precincts of Westminster was greeted with a howl of fury from the mob. ‘Damn him ! Out with him !’ they shouted, and crowded round his carriage. One of the Members of the Commons named Bedingfield saw what was happening and rushed to his Sovereign’s aid : he hurled down those who had clambered on to the coach, and for the moment saved an ugly situation. But the real fury of the mob was yet to come, when in passing through St James’s Park the mounted escort was momentarily cut off. The Earl of Onslow wrote an account of this drive through St James’s Park.

The scene opened [he said], and the insulting abuse offered to His Majesty was what I can never think of but with horror, nor ever forget what I felt when they proceeded to throw stones into the coach, several of which hit the King, which he bore with signal patience, but not without sensible remarks of indignation and resentment at the indignities offered to his person and office. The glasses were all broken to pieces, and in this situation we were during our passage through the Park. The King took one of the stones out of the cuff of his coat, where it had lodged, and gave it to me saying —“I make you a present of this, as a mark of the civilities we have met with on our journey to-day.”

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It was a proletarian outburst, which was probably engineered by a few wild men who liked to think of themselves as republicans ; for on the following night when George put in an appearance at *Covent Garden* he was given a rousing reception by those respectable members of the upper and middle classes who patronized the theatre.

In the following February, however, there was another unpleasant incident. As the King and Queen were returning from *Drury Lane* a stone was thrown into the royal coach and the Queen was struck on the cheek ; and although a reward of £1,000 was offered for information which would lead to the arrest of the thrower no one was ever brought to justice. Four years later a dastardly attempt was made to assassinate the King. He had gone to *Drury Lane* to see Colley Cibber's comedy *She Would and She Would Not*, which was one of the most popular plays in Town ; and he had just entered the royal box in the theatre when above the strains of 'God Save the King' was heard a pistol's shot. One John Hadfield, who turned out to be a former trooper of the 15th Light Dragoons, from his place in the front row of the pit, had fired at the King ; but by good fortune the shot had gone wide. The house was in a turmoil, and once again the King won golden opinions for his coolness and courage : he resolutely refused to leave the building, but calmly stood at the front of the box, bowing graciously to the audience who sang 'God Save the King' until they were hoarse. Behind the scenes Sheridan was busily scribbling a new verse to the National Anthem, which was sung there and then by Michael Kelly, the actor and composer, who was musical director of *Drury Lane* at the time.

From every latent foe,
From the assassin's blow,
 God save the King !
O'er him Thine arm extend ;
For Britain's sake defend
 Our father, Prince, and friend ;
 God save the King !

Kelly's was the most popular 'turn' that evening ; and the King was charmed by Sheridan's demonstration of loyalty.

The undercurrent of discontent, which manifested itself in nearly every part of the country, found its way into the Royal

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Navy. In 1797 the country had the unhappy experience of witnessing mutinies in the fleets at Spithead and at the Nore. How far they were the work of revolutionaries strictly so-called it is difficult to say: the mutiny at Spithead was more like a strike than a mutinous outbreak; and even that of the sailors at the Nore was not anti-monarchical. Conditions in the Royal Navy were abominable: the pay was low, the food was bad, and the behaviour of many of the officers was inhuman. At Spithead the men acted with great moderation: they tabled their grievances, and prevented any excesses on shore. As soon as the Government's representatives promised them better conditions they returned to their duty and released the officers who during the mutiny had been honourably confined in their cabins or put on shore; and all might have been well had not the men come to the conclusion that the Government would not keep faith with them. It was the King's 'peculiar Admiral,' Howe [‘Black Dick’ the sailors called him], who finally restored order at Spithead, when a second outbreak occurred.

In the fleet at the Nore the turn of events was more serious. The mutineers were led by Richard Parker, who was a man of some education; and the demands which were put forward, such as the choice of officers, made serious inroads on naval discipline. The Admiralty were quite ready to grant the legitimate demands of the men and ‘to bury in oblivion all that had passed’; but Parker and his friends were not willing to stop at this; and not only was the red flag run up on their ships but orders were given to fire on those vessels which refused to join the mutineers. The incident assumed alarming proportions when all but two ships from Duncan’s squadron which was blockading the Dutch fleet in the Texel joined in the mutiny; and there was evidence of discontent in the artillery at Woolwich. But the Government refused to be browbeaten: better conditions of service had already been promised in the negotiations with the sailors at Spithead, and this was to be the limit of the Government’s concessions. What would be the upshot of the business no one knew. In the City the money market revealed the general state of uncertainty and alarm: ‘Three per Cents’ fell to 48, lower than they had ever been. George was whole-heartedly with the Government: there must be no further surrender. At Parker’s request the Earl of Northesk, who was a Captain on *The Sandwich*,

which the mutineers had made their headquarters, carried a petition to London to the King. It was received in proper form, but Northesk was told to tell the mutineers that nothing more would be done for them and that they must return to duty immediately. It was on this occasion that George paid a fine tribute to the British sailor. To Northesk he said :

I am not ignorant of the character of the British sailor : he may be misled for a time, but he will eventually return to his duty.

In the face of the Government's firmness the mutiny petered out rather feebly ; and Parker and the chief instigators were brought to trial and punished.

George had some doubt in his mind about the wisdom of hanging Parker ; but when he was informed that in the interest of discipline an example must be made of him and some eighteen of his companions he withdrew his objection, and refused to grant pardons. Perhaps he was touched by their loyalty to his own person ; for, curiously enough, on his birthday—June 4th—the Royal Standard was run up in place of the Red Flag, and the crews of the disloyal vessels manned ship !

But if the mutinous behaviour of the sailors at Spithead and the Nore had momentarily besmirched the Royal Navy's fair name, there were compensating triumphs to keep alive in every British breast that belief that Great Britain was the unchallenged 'Mistress of the Seas.' Even before the mutinies broke out, on February 14th, the country had gone wild with excitement on the news that Admiral Sir John Jervis and Commodore Nelson, with fifteen Sails of the Line, had smashed a great Spanish fleet of nearly thirty sails off Cape St Vincent ; and on their return home—and sailing with them was pride of the Spaniards' navy, *La Santissima Trinidad*, a vessel of 136 guns—the King had honoured both, conferring an earldom on Jervis and a knighthood on Nelson. Then in the following October came the news how on the 11th of that month the Dutch Admiral de Winter, sailing out of the Texel with a fine fleet, had tried to run Admiral Adam Duncan's blockade, and had been caught and defeated at Camperdown.

A story is told that when the news of Camperdown reached Windsor the Princess Augusta chided her father for not showing greater enthusiasm over the victory.

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Papa, you are not half happy enough [she said]; so many of the Dutch have fallen, and so few of our English!

Slowly the King repeated to himself his daughter's words; and then, 'as if awakened from a reverie,' rebuked her.

Remember, Augusta, there are just as many widows and orphans as if they were all English!

On October 19th the King wrote to Bishop Richard Hurd of Worcester who was a very dear friend of the Royal Family:

The valour of the Navy never shone more than in the late glorious action off Camperdown, on the Dutch coast, and I trust its effects will render our enemies more humble, and that while my subjects praise the conduct of the officers and sailors, that they will render thanks, where most due, who has crowned their endeavours with success. I feel this last sentiment so strongly, that I proposed to order a Thanksgiving on the occasion, in which I mean to join, in consequence of the success over the Dutch, the two memorable battles of Earl Howe over the French, and the Earl of St Vincent over the Spaniards.

On December 19th, therefore, the King and Queen, followed by members of their numerous family, went in state to St Paul's. They were attended by the great Officers of State, Lords and Commons, the chief captains of the Navy who chanced to be in Home ports, detachments of marines and sailors. Duncan bore aloft de Winter's flag: Sir Alan Gardiner, the French banner taken by Howe on June 1st, 1794. The streets were lined with people; and as the procession, demonstrative of a nation's power, went by they cheered and cheered again. But Pitt was greeted with hisses and cat-calls: Fate had reserved for him the position of the most unpopular man in the King's dominions.

* * *

GEORGE HAD ALWAYS taken a keen interest in Irish affairs. The lawlessness which prevailed in that unhappy island, it is true, offended his sense of decency and order; but he was not always certain that the fault lay with Irishmen. This does not mean that George was pro-Irish: on the contrary, his outlook was governed by those prejudices from which Englishmen, in their dealings with Ireland, seemed quite incapable of escaping; but his own

experience of Whig inefficiency in the business of government tended to produce in him a sympathy towards Ireland which was rare in the rulers of the eighteenth century. On one point he was as prejudiced against Irishmen as any of his subjects : he abhorred Popery and had no great liking for Presbyterianism, which he regarded as 'Scotch metaphysics' ; and these antipathies prevented him from ever understanding the aspirations of the majority of his Irish subjects.

When Swift had said that 'government without consent of the governed is slavery' he had Ireland in his mind ; but his words were meaningless to Englishmen who proudly acclaimed that Irishmen enjoyed a system of representative government similar to that in vogue in Great Britain ; and the fact that this Irish Parliament was a byword of political corruption carried no weight with men who daily used corruption to retain political power in their own hands. George, for example, saw no wrong in a representative system which denied Catholics a share of political power : in his view they had demonstrated, not once but many times, their unfitness to participate in the government of a 'free' country. He was confident in his own mind that inestimable benefits would flow from a system of government which was so firmly planted in 'true' religion and a respect for property ; and any attempt to upset such an arrangement was both impious and treasonable.

Looking back over history it becomes only too painfully clear what glorious opportunities of giving Ireland a 'fair deal' were missed in George's reign. Henry Grattan in 1782 had won legislative independence for his native land after a stern struggle ; but at best it was a Pyrrhic victory, which virtually yoked the Irish people to a Parliament in Dublin dominated by an Episcopalian aristocracy ; and it was inevitable that those Irishmen who thought deeply about the future of their country should direct their attentions to the question of parliamentary reform. Such was the primary object of the *United Irishmen*, a society of Catholics and Presbyterians organized by Edward FitzGerald and Wolfe Tone ; but the slow progress which was made against the corruption prevalent in the system, and the spread of democratic ideas following upon the outbreak of the French Revolution, made it possible for the extremists in the movement to argue in favour of more drastic action ; and as a result a movement which was

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perfectly legitimate in its inception degenerated into a harbinger of revolt.

As in the case of the American colonies, so in Ireland, the Government in London put itself at the mercy of agents in Dublin who did not represent Irish opinion. ‘The Castle Junto,’ representing those members of the Irish executive controlled by the Ministry in Great Britain, took its stand on the preservation of the corrupt and sectarian system of government which invested them with so much power; and their views on such vital questions as the removal of religious disabilities, the abolition of tithes payable to an alien Church and parliamentary reform were accepted by the Cabinet without question. Two names stand out in this ‘Castle Junto’—John FitzGibbon [after 1795 Earl of Clare], the Lord Chancellor of Ireland from 1789 to 1802, and John Beresford, the First Commissioner of the Customs. Both men were violent opponents of the emancipation of the Catholics: both were able to exert great influence in ministerial circles in London.

In 1793 the authorities made what they considered to be a most generous concession to the Irish Catholics, when they permitted them to vote at elections. But what was the value of a vote when it could only be cast for a Protestant candidate? This was a question which the authorities preferred not to answer: or, if they did answer, they invariably resorted to the offensive contention that only Protestants were fit and proper persons to sit in the Irish Legislature. Many of the Irish reformers, however, were prepared to accept the concession as a positive gain: the next move was to secure the right to nominate Catholics for election to Parliament.

Two years later William Wentworth FitzWilliam, Earl FitzWilliam was sent as Lord-Lieutenant to Ireland. He was the nephew and heir of Rockingham; and had joined Pitt’s Administration with the other Foxites in 1794, receiving at first the office of Lord President of the Council. FitzWilliam carried with him to Ireland an ‘olive branch,’ and there is little doubt that others—and indeed Pitt may have been among them—had placed it in his hands. Before he left England it was represented to him that the time had come to break the power of the ‘Castle Junto’; and being a man of fine courage FitzWilliam determined to lose no time in grappling with the problem. His enthusiasm outstripped his discretion, and incidentally put him at the mercy of the very

men whom he meant to overthrow. Two days after landing in Ireland he dismissed Beresford from his post of First Commissioner of the Customs. Beresford rushed to London to state his case. What had he done to warrant such treatment? How could a Lord-Lieutenant who had only been in Ireland for two days charge him with 'malversation'? FitzWilliam's precipitancy put the Government in London in a dilemma; and even his friends found it impossible to defend him against the counter-attacks of Beresford and his supporters.

But worse was to come. On landing in Ireland FitzWilliam had received the customary loyal addresses, and among them were petitions from Catholics and Dissenters begging him to redress their grievances. His replies were so generously-minded that all Ireland thought that the promised day of their redemption was at hand; and Dublin Castle was inundated with petitions pleading for emancipation. And, with a roar of rage the Protestants demanded FitzWilliam's recall.

It is important to understand FitzWilliam's position. On leaving England he had apparently had a long talk on policy with Portland. The Duke laid it down that the Lord-Lieutenant was not to introduce a measure of emancipation, or even to allow the Irish Ministry to do so, because the Government in London were of the opinion that the time was not yet ripe for such a concession to the Irish Catholics. On the other hand, if Grattan as the Catholics' champion introduced a measure of relief FitzWilliam was empowered to let it be known that the Government in London was prepared to examine the provisions of such a Bill and to decide how far it could be supported. In plain language FitzWilliam was given a mandate to feel his way towards emancipation: he interpreted his instructions as giving him the right to dangle before the Irish Catholics a promise of complete political freedom.

There was nothing for it but to recall FitzWilliam. The Cabinet made the decision unanimously, but with considerable regret; for a project which called for the most delicate handling had been wrecked by the rashness of an over-zealous Minister. He left Dublin Castle on March 25th, less than three months after taking up his residence there; and his departure brought infinite sorrow to distracted Ireland. It is recorded that Dublin's shops were shut that day, that men and women put on mourning clothes,

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and that his coach was drawn sorrowfully to the quay where he was to embark for England.

FitzWilliam's behaviour in Ireland was heartily disapproved of by the King; and on February 6th he submitted to Pitt what he called 'a rough paper,' in which he defined his own position in the question of emancipation at some length.

Having yesterday, after the Drawing Room, seen the Duke of Portland, who mentioned the receipt of letters from the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, which, to my greatest astonishment, propose the total change of the principles of government which have been followed by every administration in that kingdom since the abdication of King James the Second, and consequently overturning the fabric that the wisdom of our fathers esteemed necessary, and which the laws of this country have directed; and thus, after no longer stay than three weeks in Ireland, venturing to condemn the labours of ages, and wanting an immediate adoption of ideas which every man of property in Ireland and every friend to the Protestant Religion must feel diametrically contrary to those he has imbibed from his earliest youth.

Undoubtedly the Duke of Portland made this communication to sound my sentiments previous to the Cabinet Meeting to be held to-morrow on this weighty subject. I expressed my surprise at the idea of admitting the Roman Catholics to vote in Parliament, but chose to avoid entering further into the subject, and only heard the substance of the propositions without giving my sentiments. But the more I reflect on the subject, the more I feel the danger of the proposal, and therefore should not think myself free from blame if I did not put my thoughts on paper even in the present coarse shape, the moment being so pressing, and not sufficient time to arrange them in a more digested shape previous to the Duke of Portland's laying the subject before the Cabinet.

Ireland varies from most other countries by property residing almost entirely in the hands of the Protestants, whilst the lower orders of the people are chiefly Roman Catholics. The change proposed must, therefore, disoblige the greater number to benefit a few, the inferior orders not being of rank to gain favourably by the change. That they must also be gainers, it is proposed that an army be kept constantly in Ireland, and a kind of yeomanry, which in reality would be Roman Catholic police corps, established, which would keep the Protestant interest under awe.

English Government ought well to consider before it gives any encouragement to a proposition which cannot fail sooner or later to separate the two kingdoms, or by way of establishing a similar line of conduct in this kingdom adopt measures to prevent which my family was invited to mount the throne of this kingdom in preference to the House of Savoy.

One might suppose the authors of this scheme had not viewed the tendency or extent of the question, but were actuated alone by the peevish inclination of humiliating the old friends of English Government, or from the desire of paying implicit obedience to the heated imagination of Mr Burke.

Besides the discontent and changes which must be occasioned by the dereliction of all the principles that have been held as wise by our ancestors, it is impossible to foresee how far it may alienate the minds of this kingdom; for though I fear religion is but little attended to by persons of rank, and that the word *toleration*, or rather *indifference* to that sacred subject, has been too much admitted by them, yet the bulk of the nation has not been spoiled by foreign travels and manners, and still feels the blessings of having a fixed principle from whence the source of every tie to society and government must trace its origin.

I cannot conclude without expressing that the subject is beyond the decision of any Cabinet of Ministers—that, could they form an opinion in favour of such a measure, it would be highly dangerous, without previous concert with the leading men of every order in the State, to send any encouragement to the Lord-Lieutenant on this subject; and if received with the same suspicion I do, I am certain it would be safer even to change the new administration in Ireland, if its continuance depends on the success of this proposal, than to prolong its existence on grounds that must sooner or later ruin one if not both kingdoms.

Though every line in this memorandum rings with prejudice there was much wisdom in the King's views. It is always dangerous to speculate in history; but such a recent controversy as that which arose over the introduction of the Revised Prayer Book indicates the inherent Protestantism of the English people; and in George's reign the awful lawlessness which developed during the Gordon Riots proves that the fiercest passions could be aroused against the Catholics. There was one possible way out of the difficulty—a conference of 'the leading men of every order in the State' to discuss the question; but, again, as sub-

sequent events proved many of ‘the leading men’ shared all George’s prejudices, and they would have been as obstinate as the King himself in their refusal to recognize that benefits would be bestowed on Ireland by a generous measure of Catholic Emancipation. Catholicism, in the opinion of the normal Englishman, was the sure road to damnation; and Englishmen are peculiarly solicitous about preventing any one going to Hell.

From the time of FitzWilliam’s recall to the passing of the Act of Union Ireland was tortured by the agonies of a civil war. The *United Irishmen* was now a separatist organization, materially assisted by the revolutionary government in Paris; and in December 1796 a French expeditionary force was sent to assist in ridding the country of the hated English. Hoche’s expedition was a lamentable failure; but the rebels were out all over the country. Dublin Castle struck hard—so hard indeed that excesses were committed which could equal those ‘of a Committee of Public Safety or the Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris.’ Once Catholic and Dissenter had stood shoulder to shoulder to demand reform; but after 1798 they were in opposite camps. Orangemen in Ulster bragged that they would harry their Catholic neighbours ‘to Hell or Connacht’: Catholics, urged on by their priests, gave as good as they got. The unhappy island ran red with blood; and even hardened soldiers like the Earl of Moira, the Earl Cornwallis, Sir Ralph Abercromby and Sir John More were sickened by the sights which met their eyes. But Ireland was in league with France: this fact compelled a ruthless suppression of the risings, which were occasioned by British bad management.

Pitt saw clearly that something must be done to bring peace to the harassed land. In his view a return to the old system was sheer madness, which could only result in a repetition of the disorders which brought such suffering to the island. Why not a union of the two legislatures? Such a plan would ‘raise the minds of Irishmen from local to imperial aims,’ and effect in time a complete and harmonious blending of the two races. When he sent Cornwallis out to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant in 1798 he instructed him to sound Irish opinion on the plan. Within a month of landing Cornwallis wrote to Pitt to say that the scheme was none too favourably received; but, he added, ‘convinced as I am that it is the only measure that can long

preserve this country [Ireland], I will never lose sight of it.' And he was as good as his word. Soon afterwards he was able to report to Pitt that 'the principal people here are so frightened that they would, I believe, readily consent to a Union': but at the same time Cornwallis struck a warning note when he stated that even the timid were resolved that 'it must be a Protestant Union.'

Over in Ireland Pitt was ably supported by Cornwallis and Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh; and the latter, whom he had specially chosen for the post of Chief Secretary in 1798, was well aware that emancipation of the Catholics was to be the outcome of Pitt's plan. Cornwallis and Castlereagh found it no simple matter to persuade even a timorous Episcopalian minority in Ireland that it was expedient to submerge the Irish in the British Parliament; but they had unlimited means at their disposal, and Pitt behind them; and by purchasing votes and promises of honours they were at last able to obtain a majority in favour of the Union. The British Parliament adopted Pitt's measure in 1799: a year later the Irish Parliament voted its extinction. Henceforth the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland were to be united; and the people of Ireland were to be represented in the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland by four spiritual peers sitting in rotation, twenty-eight temporal peers elected for life by their order, and one hundred members of the House of Commons. The Established Churches of Great Britain and Ireland were to be united. There was to be free trade between the two countries.

It is evident that George was none too happy while the negotiations were in progress. He was willing to admit that the Union would bestow benefits on both countries; but he was suspicious about the future of the Catholics. He expressed his fears to Henry Dundas, the Treasurer of the Navy.

I only hope [he said] Government is not pledged to anything in favour of the Roman Catholics.

Nor was Dundas's reply—'it will be a matter for future consideration'—too reassuring; and there and then George explained to him why he would never violate his Coronation Oath. Dundas apparently tried to explain to the King that his oath was limited; but George cut him short with the testy retort:

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None of your Scotch metaphysics, Mr Dundas! None of your Scotch metaphysics!

Similarly in January 1799, shortly after Pitt had outlined his plan to the House of Commons, George stated his case in a letter to the Prime Minister.

I cannot [he wrote] help at the same time expressing to Mr Pitt some surprise at having seen in a letter from Lord Castlereagh to the Duke of Portland on Monday an idea of an established stipend by the authority of Government for the Catholic Clergy of Ireland. I am certain any encouragement to such an idea must give real offence to the Established Church in Ireland, as well as to the true friends of our Constitution; for it is certainly creating a second Church Establishment, which could not but be highly injurious. The tolerating Dissenters is fair; but the trying to perpetuate a separation in religious opinions by providing for the support of their clergy as an establishment is certainly going far beyond the bounds of justice or policy.

It is impossible to believe that Pitt did not reassure the King at this stage: he could do so quite honourably because whatever his plans for the future may then have been he had definitely abandoned the idea of linking the emancipation of the Catholics to the Act of Union. Thus George in May 1800 could regard the latter as

one of the most useful measures that has been effected during my reign, one that will give stability to the whole empire, and from the want of industry and capital in Ireland be but little felt by this country as diminishing its trade and manufactures. For the advantages to Ireland can only arise by slow degrees, and the wealth of Great Britain will undoubtedly, by furnishing the rest of the globe with its articles of commerce, not feel any material disadvantage in that particular from the future prosperity of Ireland.

A selfish way of looking at it perhaps, but nevertheless thoroughly British.

Pitt was too much of a realist to ignore the stern logic of events; and although he knew that the King would resist any attempt to remove the disabilities under which Catholics laboured he was none the less convinced that it was his duty as a public servant to proceed along the lines which he had originally laid down. He could not fail to recognize that the Union as it stood was a

mockery of justice : it had been effected by discreditable means, which could only be justified when peace and prosperity was given to Ireland. Many Irish Catholics had supported the Union believing that it was the prelude to emancipation ; and while Castlereagh had not said that it would be so he had with Pitt's knowledge hinted that there was reasonable hope of such a concession. Conscious that the problem was one of extreme delicacy Pitt proceeded to submit his proposals to his colleagues in the Cabinet : they were told that, in his opinion, peace would only come to Ireland when the Government was willing [1] to endow the Catholic and Dissenting clergy, [2] commute the tithes then payable to an alien and minority Church, and [3] impose a political in place of the religious test, so that Catholics might be free to sit in Parliament and take up State employment. He did not submit these proposals to the King ; but Loughborough, the Lord Chancellor, who was bitterly opposed to any concessions to the Catholics, told George what was going on behind the scenes ; and at the same time stressed the inviolability of his Coronation Oath. Dr John Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Dr William Stewart, Archbishop of Armagh, endorsed everything that Loughborough had said, and accentuated that bigotry which was only to be expected in a loyal son of the Church of England in the eighteenth century.

George was on the horns of a dilemma. He was sincerely attached to Pitt, whom he had come to know as a man eager at all times to serve his country : he was more personally attached to the Church of England, which he now believed to be endangered by Pitt's proposals. Conscience forced him to the conclusion that for once Pitt had committed an error of judgement —that his policy was not in the country's interests ; and it was his duty as a King to resist his Prime Minister's plan by every means at his command.

On January 31st, 1801, Pitt officially communicated his intentions to the King in a long and reasoned letter. There is no trace of a desire to dictate to his sovereign : he argued with courtesy and restraint that the measure which he proposed to introduce 'would be attended by no danger to the Established Church' and that greater security would be obtained in Ireland 'by gradually attaching the Popish clergy to the Government.' He pleaded with the King 'maturely to weigh' the proposals

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which were now submitted to him; but at the same time he indicated with quiet firmness that their rejection must force him to retire from the office which he had occupied so long.

George replied on February 1st:

I should not do justice to the warm impulse of my heart [he wrote] if I entered on the subject most unpleasant to my mind without first expressing that the cordial affection I have for Mr Pitt, as well as high opinion of his talents and integrity, greatly add to my uneasiness on this occasion; but a sense of religious as well as political duty has made me, from the moment I mounted the Throne, consider the Oath that the wisdom of our forefathers has enjoined the Kings of this Realm to take at their Coronation, and enforced by the obligation of instantly following it in the course of the Ceremony with taking the Sacrament, as so binding a religious obligation on me to maintain the fundamental maxims on which our Constitution is placed, namely, the Church of England being the established one, and that those who hold employment in the State must be members of it, and consequently obliged not only to take Oaths against Popery, but to receive the Holy Communion agreeably to the rites of the Church of England. This principle of duty must therefore prevent me from discussing any proposition tending to destroy this groundwork of our happy Constitution, and much more so that now mentioned by Mr Pitt, which is no less than the complete overthrow of the whole fabric. When the Irish Propositions were transmitted to me by a Joint Message from both Houses of the British Parliament, I told the Lords and Gentlemen sent on that occasion, that I would with pleasure and without delay forward them to Ireland; but that, as individuals, I could not help acquainting that my inclination to a Union with Ireland was principally founded on a trust that the uniting the Established Churches of the two Kingdoms would for ever shut the door to any further measures with respect to the Roman Catholics. These two instances must show Mr Pitt that my opinions are not those formed on the moment, but such as I have imbibed for forty years, and from which I can never depart; but, Mr Pitt once acquainted with my sentiments, his assuring me that he will stave off the only question whereon I fear from his letter we can agree—for the advantage and comfort of continuing to have his advice I will certainly abstain from talking on this subject, which is the one nearest my heart. I cannot help it if others pretend to guess at my opinions, which I have never disguised: but if those who unfortunately differ with me will keep this subject at rest, I will on my part, most correctly on my part, be

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silent also ; but this restraint I shall put on myself from affection for Mr Pitt, but further I cannot go, for I cannot sacrifice my duty to any consideration. Though I do not pretend to have the power of changing Mr Pitt's opinion, when thus unfortunately fixed, yet I shall hope his sense of duty will prevent his retiring from his present situation to the end of my life ; for I can with great truth assert that I shall, from public and private considerations, feel great regret if I ever find myself obliged at any time, from a sense of religious and political duty, to yield to his entreaties of retiring from his seat at the Board of Treasury.

But Pitt's mind was as firmly made up as the King's ; and although further correspondence passed between them on February 5th George reluctantly allowed Pitt to resign his office.

It was Henry Addington, who came to the King's rescue in this emergency. He had been Speaker of the House of Commons since 1789 and was one of Pitt's childhood friends. Indeed it was at Pitt's request that Addington agreed to place himself at the head of a new Administration ;¹ and there is little doubt that he himself believed that he was to be merely a 'stop-gap' until the crisis had blown over. He had frankly told the King that he was unequal to the task, as he actually proved to be ; but his own political defects were discounted by the fact that Pitt had promised him his support—in fact that he would sit behind him in Parliament ; and his attachment to the Establishment—'as sincere as mine,' the King told Hurd of Worcester—

¹ The chief members of Addington's Administration were as set out below :

First Lord of the Treasury : Mr Henry Addington
and *vice*

Chancellor of the Exchequer : Mr William Pitt.

Lord Chancellor : Earl of Eldon *vice* Baron Loughborough.

Lord Privy Seal : Earl of Westmoreland.

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs : Baron Hawkesbury *vice* Baron Grenville.

Secretary of State for Home Affairs : The Hon. Thomas Pelham.

Secretary of State for War : Baron Hobart *vice* Mr William Windham.

Master-General of the Ordnance : Earl of Chatham.

First Lord of the Admiralty : Earl St Vincent *vice* Earl Spencer.

Lord President of the Council : Duke of Portland.

Secretary at War : Mr Charles Yorke *vice* Mr Henry Dundas.

Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland : Earl of Hardwicke *vice* Marquis Cornwallis.

Paymasters-General : Mr Thomas Steele.

Baron Glenbervie *vice* Mr Dudley Ryder.

Postmasters-General : Baron Auckland.

Lord Charles Spencer.

Attorney-General : Sir Edward Law.

Solicitor-General : The Honourable Spencer Perceval.

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allayed suspicion of any further attempts to raise the unhappy question of Catholic Emancipation.

The school lesson has it that by his crass stupidity and futile bigotry George was responsible for much of the unhappiness which characterized Anglo-Irish relations after the Act of Union. This is probably true; but it does not take into account the fact George himself made great sacrifices when he refused to sanction Pitt's proposals. Even if he had sanctioned them it is very doubtful whether they would have passed safely through Parliament. The Bench of Bishops, with the possible exception of the scientifically-minded Richard Watson of Llandaff, would have voted to a man against relief for the Catholics; and a great many of the lay peers would have shared their prejudices. England was too obsessed with the idea that the Irish were blood-thirsty ruffians and slavish idolaters to give Ireland a fair deal in 1801, and even when nearly thirty years later the concession was wrested from her by force a great many educated Englishmen still thought that it was wrong.

One cannot perhaps appreciate the anguish of George's mind in those fateful days of February. For nearly eighteen years he had enjoyed the services of a man, whose political honesty was unquestioned, and whose ability sheltered the King from the stormy blasts of political life. George had come to a time of life when tranquillity meant much to him. But the safety of his soul was his first consideration. In his anguish he tortured his mind a hundred times with the question :

Where is that power on earth to absolve me from the due observance of every sentence of that Oath, particularly the one requiring me to maintain the Protestant reformed religion?

His spiritual advisers could only tell him that he was irrevocably bound. On another occasion he read the Oath to his wife and children, again hoping that some escape would be found. He invited them to ponder it well; and they could only agree with him, when he said :

If I violate it, I am no longer legal Sovereign of this country, but it falls to the House of Savoy.¹

¹ He was not quite correct here: the 'Old Pretender's' second son was still alive—a Cardinal of the Catholic Church.

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It was his Gethsemane; and like Another he found that it was not possible for him to refuse the cup of sorrow and suffering placed before him.

Then his mind gave way beneath the awful strain imposed upon it. On February 13th he contracted a chill: two days later he wrote to his new Prime Minister a brave letter from his sick-room.

The real care I am taking—for I have not been down stairs this day—with James's Powders, which Dr Gisborne advised, certainly is removing my cold.

When Addington went to see him on the 17th George appeared to be 'on the mend,' and three days later he conducted some tedious business of State 'with great dignity and calmness.' But he was very afraid of himself: to Eldon he talked long about his previous illness, 'and especially dwelt on his feelings during some lucid moments.' Addington, whose father had been the medical adviser of old Chatham and his family, advised the King to use a pillow of hops to cure his insomnia. [Incidentally the advice so amused Addington's friends and enemies that they dubbed him 'the Doctor'; and the nickname clung to him for many years.] But all these remedies proved useless; and from February 22nd to March 2nd the King's mind was hopelessly deranged.

On March 7th, however, he was well enough to have an interview with his favourite son, Frederick, Duke of York. He anxiously asked him about the political situation; and would have talked of Catholic Emancipation had not the Duke dissuaded him. He replied to his father's query:

Sir, since this point which has given Your Majesty so much uneasiness, is settled, it is better now to forget all that has passed.

The invalid apologized for the trouble and sorrow which his illness had given his family; and when his son told him that now their one concern was that he should take greater care of himself in the future he promised that he would do so.

I will you may depend upon it [he said]. I have, I fear, neglected this too much, and presumed a great deal more than I ought on my constitution. Be assured I will be more careful for the future.

THE CORONATION OATH

By the 11th Addington found him well enough to conduct business, but he was still weak, and he looked older. When the younger Dr Willis informed him that Pitt had been greatly affected by the illness, the King said :

Tell him that I am now quite well—quite recovered from my illness ; but what has he not to answer for who is the cause of my having been ill at all ?

The royal message caused Pitt great unhappiness. He consulted Willis : should he assure the King that he would never again support any measure for the relief of the Catholics ? Willis advised Pitt to do so ; and there and then the latter gave his promise. In a letter to Pitt Willis wrote some days later :

I told him [the King] what you wished ; and after saying the kindest things of you he exclaimed—" Now my mind will be at ease." Upon the Queen's coming in, the first thing he told her was your message, and he made the same observation upon it.

Into the Shadows

THE ADDINGTON ADMINISTRATION officially took office on March 14th, 1801. Unfortunately the strain and excitement of the day seriously affected the King's health. On the 16th his Ministers noticed that he was very nervy when presiding over a meeting of the Privy Council; and four days later he was reported to be 'low-spirited.' The greatest secrecy was maintained to prevent the country from learning how ill the King was; and once again the Prince of Wales was in high hopes that a regency would have to be set up. According to Pitt's friend, George Rose, after seeing his father, the Prince immediately sent for the Chancellor to inform him

that it was the intention of His Majesty, declared yesterday, to devolve the government on him, the Prince; that he wished the Chancellor would consider the proper mode of that being carried into effect, and that it was the King's intention to retire to Hanover or America.

He told the same story to the Earl of Rosslyn [the Loughborough or Wedderburn of earlier pages]; but like Eldon he was evidently sceptical of the truth of the Prince's version of the interview with his father; and nothing was done. There is no doubt that the King was very ill. George Rose, writing of an interview with Willis, said :

He told me that unfortunately the King had taken a decided aversion to himself and the other medical people about him, and showed great impatience to get from under their restraint; that after His Majesty went to Kew, they had been under the necessity of removing him from the house where the Queen and Princesses were; but that that was not effected without a mark of violence from His Majesty towards him.

One is led to infer that the younger Willises had not their father's skill in dealing with the royal patient, and their refusal to allow him to see his wife and children was most bitterly resented—no doubt with a bad effect upon his health. When Eldon went to see him he found the sick King in the depths of despair because they kept him away from those he loved; and he told the Chancellor that he would not transact any further business of State until this order was countermanded. Eldon thereupon persuaded the doctors to allow their patient to return to 'the house where the Queen was'; and it would seem that this act of kindness did more to restore him to his normal health than all the medicines which the doctors gave him. On May 21st he was well enough to attend a meeting of the Privy Council. According to one who was present his behaviour was perfectly normal:

After the business was finished the King rose and spoke to all his Council individually, going round as at the Levee. He looked extremely well, stout and upright, and joked as usual with the Ministers.

But this was a false hope. Although the King was allowed to go out riding with Dr John Willis on May 25th there was still 'something' in the King's behaviour which gave rise to alarm. Dr Thomas Willis, in a letter to Eldon on the same day, said :

This morning I walked with His Majesty, who was in a perfectly composed and quiet state. He told me with great seeming satisfaction that he had had a most charming night, "but one sleep from eleven to four," when, alas! he had but three hours' sleep in the night, which upon the whole was passed in restlessness, in getting out of bed, opening the shutters, praying at times violently, and in making such remarks as betray a consciousness in him of his own situation, but which are evidently made for the purpose of concealing it from the Queen. He frequently called out—"I am now perfectly well, and my Queen, my Queen, has saved me." Whilst I state these particulars to your Lordship, I must beg to remind you how much afraid the Queen is lest she should be committed to him; for the King has sworn he will never forgive her if she relates anything that passes in the night. . . . It is too evident, my Lord, that it cannot be proper, since it cannot be safe, for the King to go to Weymouth as soon as he intends.

Willis begged the Chancellor to persuade the King to postpone his visit to Weymouth. Apparently the Chancellor did so in a rather subtle way—by suggesting that for reasons of State the King ought to remain at Kew! The ruse worked, for on the 31st the King wrote to Eldon :

The King cannot allow any difficulty to stand in the way of his doing what may be most useful for the public service. He will therefore postpone his journey to Weymouth till the close of the Session of Parliament, relying that the Lord Chancellor and Mr Addington will bring it as soon as possible to a conclusion.

On the same day he wrote to his friend Bishop Hurd :

After a most tedious and severe illness, from which, by the interposition of Divine Providence, I have most wonderfully escaped the jaws of death. . . . I can now assure you that my health is daily improving, though I cannot boast of the same strength and spirits I enjoyed before. Still, with quiet and sea-bathing, I trust they will soon be regained.

Once again there was a relapse. The excitement of his birthday on June 4th, when at a Drawing Room in St James's Palace the official world came to offer its congratulations, checked the convalescence. On June 16th Dr Thomas Willis wrote to tell the Chancellor that he had 'nothing to say that is in truth favourable.'

His Majesty [he continued] rode out this morning at ten o'clock and did not return till four. . . . His attendants thought him much hurried, and so think his pages. He has a great thirst upon him, and his family are in great fear. His Majesty still talks much of his prudence, but he shows none. His body, mind, and tongue are all upon the stretch every minute; and the manner in which he is now expending money in various ways, which is so unlike him when well, all evince that he is not so right as he should be.

There is something mysterious about this illness of 1801. Undoubtedly the King's mental faculties were not in a healthy condition, but at times he was quite well enough to attend to his work. What seems to have irked him more than anything else was the attentions which the Willises danced upon him, and he apparently took a particular dislike to Dr Robert Willis. On June 21st the Chancellor received rather a pathetic letter from the King :

The King would not do justice to the feelings of his heart, if he an instant delayed expressing his conviction of the attachment the Lord Chancellor bears him, of which the letter now before him is a fresh proof; but at the same time he cannot but in the strongest manner decline having Dr Robert Willis about him. The line of practice followed with great credit by that gentleman, renders it incompatible with the King's feelings that he should—now by the goodness of Divine Providence restored to reason—consult a person of that description. His Majesty is perfectly satisfied with the zeal and attention of Dr Gisborne, in whose absence he will consult Sir Francis Millman, but cannot bear consulting any of the Willis family, though he will ever respect the character and conduct of Dr Robert Willis. No person that ever has had a nervous fever can bear to continue the physician employed on the occasion ; and this holds much more so in the calamitous one that has so long confined the King, but of which he is now completely recovered.

It is interesting to recall that the Prince of Wales objected to the Willises's treatment of his father. Why it is difficult to know.

At last, on June 28th, the King had his way and went with the Queen and his children to Weymouth. On his way west he called to see George Rose at *Cuffnells* in the New Forest country. Rose's concern about the way in which the King played fast and loose with his health was at once reported to Eldon, who was one of his oldest friends.

Unfortunately, a heavy shower fell while His Majesty was on the road, about a mile and a half short of this place [Lymington]. No entreaties could prevail with him to put on a great coat, and he was wet through before he reached the Town Hall, where he remained about three quarters of an hour speaking to the Mayor and several gentlemen. He then went to Sir Harry Neale's [of Walhampton], and dined without changing his clothes ; then rode back here, and was again wet, but changed his dress as soon as he got in. There is no describing the uneasiness I felt at His Majesty keeping on his wet clothes, because I recollect Mr Pitt telling me that his first illness, in 1788, was supposed to be brought on by the same thing ; but there was no possible means of preventing it. The exercise, too, must have been, I fear, too much after the disuse of riding for some time.

His medical advisers were troubled by this love of violent exercise. They thought that it was a manifestation of his mental trouble ; but in all probability it was nothing more or less than a studied attempt to prevent obesity—which ran in the family and of

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which George was terribly afraid. When he was a young man his fat uncle Cumberland had warned him not to take 'liberties with his belly.'

The Court was longer in Weymouth than usual that summer, and it was October before George deemed that he was well enough to return to London. Even then he was aware that he must be careful. On October 24th he wrote to Bishop Hurd :

Sea-bathing has had its usual success with me, and in truth it was never more necessary, for the severe fever I had the last winter left many unpleasant sensations. These, I have every reason to say, by the blessing of the Almighty, are nearly removed. I am forced to be very careful, and to avoid every thing of fatigue, either of mind or body, but feeling I am gradually gaining ground. The next week will be rather harassing as I must open the Session of Parliament, and attend the ceremonies in consequence ; but I shall return every day to Kew, that I may be more quiet.

* * *

WHILE THE KING had been lying ill the Addington Ministry had been hard at work trying to compose the quarrel between Great Britain and France. The country clamoured eagerly for peace ; and the Government tried to do what all Governments must try to do when ending war, make a peace with honour. It was not an easy task ; for although the French were as eager for peace as the British, they were in a strong position to dictate hard terms for any British Government to accept. Out of the welter of blood and suffering in France there had arisen a lust for conquest, which Napoleon Bonaparte had with dire consequences in Europe turned to his own advantage. In 1796 and 1797 this brilliant young Corsican soldier had with the aid of an enthusiastic army of ragged Frenchmen conquered northern Italy. In 1798 he had gone to Egypt, with the intention of winning his way to India, where he would challenge British power and atone for the disasters which had overtaken French arms in that country during the Seven Years' War. His plan miscarried, but his luck still held, and in 1799 he found himself virtually ruler of the ancient realm of France. In 1800 by his dashing victory at Marengo he had again humbled the proud Habsburgs ; and in the following year he had realized one of the cherished ambitions of Louis XIV—the Rhine as one of France's frontiers.

George regarded Napoleon as an ‘adventurer.’ In a letter to Bishop Hurd he said :

I know you are no great lover of political subjects, yet the impudent overthrow of the monstrous French Republic by a Corsican adventurer, and his creating himself to be lawgiver and executor of his own decrees, must have astonished you. Without more foresight than common sense dictates, one may allege that his impious pre-eminence cannot be of long duration.

Many Britishers shared George’s view. But the Fates were to decree that the duration of Napoleon’s rule should last longer than George could know.

The British representatives who went to France to negotiate for a peace settlement were inclined to strike hard bargains, forgetful of the fact that they were dealing with a man whose boundless ambition made it impossible for him to accept a situation in which the France he meant to rule as Emperor was made inferior to her proud neighbour on the other side of the English Channel ; and as a result the hated Frenchmen had to receive ‘concessions’—recognition of the new French Government, the surrender of Ceylon and Trinidad, and the restoration of Malta to the Knights of St John of Jerusalem. France made concessions too ; but they were at other people’s expense.

By October, when George was writing to Hurd to tell him that he had a ‘harassing’ week ahead of him, the preliminaries were signed, and were laid before the British Parliament. The new Prime Minister displayed ‘childish exultation and joy’ over a measure which he knew was popular in the country. Pitt gave the preliminaries his blessing : so did Fox, from very different motives. The latter was delighted to find that the Frenchmen had secured such a good deal. There were, of course, pessimists : Windham, for example, rose in his place to tell the House that not many years would elapse before the country would be made to recognize the insecurity of the settlement. George himself found it difficult to share Addington’s and Pitt’s optimism. To him it was ‘an experimental peace’ ; and this meant that no effort should be relaxed in preparing for an outbreak of hostilities.

A peace which all men are glad of, but no man can be proud of.

Such is said to have been Sheridan’s view of this Peace of Amiens, which was finally concluded in March 1802.

The Peace brought popularity in its train for the Addington Administration. Any one with money in his pocket was overjoyed when 'the Doctor' in the Commons announced that it was the Government's intention to dispense with the hated 'war tax'—Pitt's financial innovation whereby a man's income was taxed. Even the Opposition, now that the peace for which they had clamoured so long and so loudly was made, found little to complain about. But the confidence was short-lived. Towards the end of the year it became more and more apparent that Napoleon was out for mischief; and as the war clouds loomed again into the European skies men began to talk about the need of the inspiring leadership of Pitt.

Pitt was in a quandary: he had pledged himself to support the Government. The King's words, uttered about the time that the change of Ministry took place, rang in his ears:

If we three do but keep together, all will go well.

If there was to be a change of Government, then the first move must be made by the King or Addington. The young George Canning, who was on the threshold of a brilliant political career, urged Pitt that it was his duty to come forward and take charge of the country's affairs. Was not Pitt aware of the hopeless way in which 'the Doctor' was muddling through? Was it necessary for his followers to tell him that the country needed him? Was not his place at the helm? Pitt's reply to Canning's arguments are characteristic of the man:

I do not deny it, I will not affect a childish modesty. But recollect what I have just said. I stand pledged. I make no scruple of owning that I am ambitious; but my ambition is character, not office. I may have engaged myself inconsiderately; but I am irrevocably engaged.

Canning had an idea of presenting Addington with a memorial in which 'the Doctor' was to be told how little confidence the country had in his Government; but Pitt heard of the project, and forbade his ardent young followers to proceed further with it.

Nevertheless in the opening weeks of 1803 Addington and Pitt discussed the political situation. Difficulties were at once encountered. Addington was undoubtedly sincerely anxious that

some sort of a coalition should be brought into being; but he was also determined that no room in it should be found for Grenville, Spencer and Windham, who had so consistently opposed him since they went out of office. Pitt suggested that Addington might accept a peerage; and outlined a scheme whereby he would become Speaker of the House of Lords. By the middle of March the negotiations had completely broken down. Pitt thereupon committed his version of the talks to writing, and submitted it as a letter to Addington. Some further correspondence ensued; but to the world it was now quite obvious that an old friendship had become strained to breaking point; and the gossips lost no time in placing their own construction on the affair.

The talks had been conducted without the King's knowledge or approval. On April 20th, however, Addington mentioned them during an audience following a Drawing Room. George was much put out: he felt that he should have been consulted earlier. Addington's version was probably not altogether fair to Pitt. For George in rather a biting way observed when he had heard what his First Minister had to say:

He [Pitt] desires to put the Crown in commission—he carries his plan of removals so extremely far and high that it might reach me!

Pitt's friends urged him to see the King in person, or at least to write a letter explaining his version of the discussions. He refused to take either course of action; but he did ask Addington to place his letters before the King so that his own position might be safeguarded. On April 27th Addington acceded to his friend's request; but the King refused to read the correspondence.

It is a foolish business from one end to the other. It was begun ill, conducted ill, and terminated ill.

Such was George's observation, made to Pelham, the Home Secretary, on April 29th.

There is no doubt whatever that the negotiations were badly managed on both sides, as the Duke of York said to Malmesbury.

In my own view of the transaction, both parties were in the wrong. It has been so managed as to put Pitt's return to office, though more necessary than ever, at a greater distance than ever.

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Even some of Pitt's own supporters 'disapproved' of his actions. What was at the back of it all? It is a difficult question to answer. It would appear that one of Pitt's conditions of joining forces with 'the Doctor' was a 'clean sweep' of the Addington Administration; whereas Addington, who had come to like the exercise of political power, was reluctant to surrender the direction of affairs to Pitt, and thought that a coalition could be effected by bringing in a 'figure-head' Prime Minister, under whom Pitt and he would serve as Secretaries of State.

Colonel Despard's trial was the centre of interest in Town in February 1803. The accused, who had served with great distinction in the 50th Regiment in the West Indies, had been apprehended for plotting against the King's life and the safety of the State. It was his intention, with the assistance of some half a dozen desperate fellows, to fire one of the captured French cannon which stood in St James's Park at the royal carriage as the King was on his way to open Parliament in October 1802; and this desperate act was to be followed by the seizure of the Bank of England and the Tower. George was quite undisturbed when they told him of Despard's plot.

The King's composure [wrote Malmesbury] on hearing of Despard's horrid designs was remarkable, and evinces a strength of mind, and tranquillity of conscience, that proves him to be the best of men.

Nelson was one of the witnesses called in Despard's defence. They had fought side by side on the 'Spanish Main,' and, said the great sailor, 'no man could have shown more zealous attachment to his Sovereign and his Country than Colonel Despard did.' But the law was inexorable: Despard and his comrades had plotted to commit a vile crime, which could only endanger the State; and on February 21st they were executed in Horse-monger Lane Gaol.

In May Addington's Administration had to face a renewal of the war with France. There was some comfort to be had from the fact that Pitt, after a long absence from Parliament, was in his place ready to support the Government. On the 23rd he delivered one of his greatest speeches in the House of Commons: it was unfortunate, he said, that the peace had been broken, but now that war had come it was the duty of every loyal subject to prosecute it relentlessly. Even Fox, who in an equally brilliant

speech opposed the war, admitted that his rival's effort was a masterpiece, which Demosthenes, had he been present, 'must have admired, and might have envied.'

In June French troops were swarming into Hanover; and the French general had installed himself in the electoral palace on which, not long before, George had spent £50,000 to make it habitable for his son, the Duke of Cambridge, whom he had appointed his Viceroy in Hanover. Fox had heard that the loss of Hanover 'affected the King severely'; but others who were nearer the Court than the Leader of the Opposition have left it on record that George accepted the news 'with singular equanimity.' He was, it is true, 'greatly effected by the truly abominable conduct of the French' in the electorate; but he had not a shadow of doubt that they would soon be sent about their business, once Europe was aroused to its duty to wage ceaseless war against the 'Corsican adventurer.'

More disturbing than the loss of Hanover was the news that Napoleon planned a great invasion of England. Forces were concentrated around Boulogne and given the grand name of *L'Armée d'Angleterre*: transports were sought in every port of the country and were mustered near at hand to convey the invaders across 'the wet ditch of the Channel.' In Great Britain young and old, rich and poor, prince and commoner, sprang to arms in defence of their homes against 'Boney' and his 'Frenchies.' There was a feverish drilling of militiamen in every shire: defences were thrown up everywhere. The King was heart and soul in these warlike preparations: he longed for the opportunity to lead his fellow-countrymen into battle against the Frenchmen. At Walmer Pitt, in his capacity as Warden of the Cinque Ports, took 'command of three thousand volunteers,' and with his customary thoroughness was making preparations to prevent a landing in that part of the country.

Unhappily the 'scare' produced another disagreement between the King and Prince of Wales. Not unnaturally the Prince was eager to play his part in the national defence; and early in August he wrote to his father, Addington and his brother York, the Commander-in-Chief, to ask for military employment. He stated that it was his duty to come forward 'in a moment of unexampled difficulty and danger.' As he had 'everything to lose by defeat' he ought to be allowed 'to share in the glory of

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victory.' Why should he be denied office in the Army when 'the younger branches of my family are either Generals or Lieutenant-Generals.' He felt his position acutely.

. . . I, who am Prince of Wales [he added], am to remain Colonel of Dragoons. There is something so humiliating in the contrast, that those who are at a distance would either doubt the reality, or suppose that to be my fault which is only my misfortune.

One wonders whether or not the King knew that his son's letter was the composition of Philip Francis, the supposed *Junius*! This knowledge might have dictated the line of action which he took, and which in some ways must appear ungracious. In his reply to the Prince he wrote :

Though I applaud your zeal and spirit, of which, I trust, no one can suppose any of my family wanting, yet, considering the repeated declarations I have made of my determination on your former applications to the same purpose, I had flattered myself to have heard no further on the subject. Should the Implacable Enemy so far succeed as to land, you will have an opportunity of showing your zeal at the head of your regiment. It will be the duty of every man to stand forth on such an occasion ; and I shall certainly think it mine to set an example in defence of everything that is dear to me and to my people.

I ever remain, my dear son,

Your most affectionate Father,

GEORGE R.

The King had laid his plans carefully in the event of an invasion, as the following memorandum drawn up in his own hand shows.

Lord Cornwallis to take the command of the central army, being the real reserve of the Volunteers and all the producible forces of the Kingdom, in case the French made any impression on the coast.

The King to move to Chelmsford if the landing was in Essex, or to Dartford if in Kent, taking with him Mr Addington and Mr Yorke of the Cabinet.

The Queen, &c., to remove to the Palace at Worcester.

The Bank books to be moved to the Tower, and the duplicate books and treasure to the Cathedral at Worcester in thirty waggons under Sir Brook Watson's management, escorted from county to county by the Volunteers.

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The merchants to shut up the Stock Exchange.

The artillery and stores from Woolwich to be transported inland by the Grand Junction Canal.

The Press to be prohibited from publishing any account of the King's Troops, or of the enemy, but by authority from the Secretary of State, to be communicated officially twice a day to all news-writers indiscriminately who may apply for it; else their presses to be seized and their printers imprisoned.

The Privy Council to be sitting in London, to issue all acts of Government.

The safety of the Queen and the Princess naturally called for his special consideration. They were committed to the care of Bishop Hurd in Worcester.

We are here [he wrote to the Bishop] in daily expectation that Buonaparte will attempt his threatened invasion, but the chances against his success seem so many that it is wonderful he persists in it. . . . Should his troops effect a landing, I shall certainly put myself at the head of mine, and my other armed subjects, to repel them; but, as it is impossible to foresee the events of such a conflict, should the enemy approach too near Windsor, I shall think it right the Queen and my daughters should cross the Severn, and shall send them to your Episcopal Palace at Worcester. By this hint I do not in the least mean that they shall be any inconvenience to you, and shall send a proper servant and furniture for their accommodation. Should such an event arise, I certainly would rather that what I value most in life should remain during the conflict in your diocese and under your roof, than in any other place in the island.

Immediately the good Bishop replied that his 'old and formerly so much honoured mansion at Worcester shall be ready to receive' his distinguished guests—'and in as good a condition as I can contrive.'

With the threat of invasion hanging perilously over the land there was work in plenty for the King to do. As the head of the nation it was expected of him that he would display that quiet courage which would quickly dispel all trace of panic: bands of Volunteers, proud to be under arms on such an occasion, looked to their King for martial encouragement. Few men were better fitted for such a duty: George was himself a courageous man, and the fact that the nation knew it had a steady influence at a time when the slightest sign of fear might have produced

tremendous difficulties for the Government. All London went to Hyde Park to see the two reviews of Volunteers in October 1803. On the 26th, attended by his seven sons, George took the salute of more than twelve thousand men of the London Volunteer Corps: two days later in the same place he reviewed the Westminster, Lambeth and Southwark Volunteers—a force numbering nearly fifteen thousand men. According to Eldon it was 'the finest sight' he 'ever beheld.'

But Napoleon's grandiose scheme for bringing to heel the 'nation of shopkeepers,' which he professed to despise so heartily and yet which actually he feared so much, was wrecked by the vigilance of the British sailors. Admiral Sir William Cornwallis, a cantankerous commander but a magnificent seaman, blockaded one French fleet in Brest: Nelson kept the other in Toulon. Not until those two fleets had united and overcome the British Navy could Napoleon run the risk of pouring a great army into England. Two years were to elapse after these magnificent reviews in Hyde Park before the bogey of invasion was for ever laid by Nelson's crushing defeat of the French and Spaniards off Cape Trafalgar. It was a victory most dearly bought, for in the midst of the popular rejoicings no man could escape the memory that Nelson was dead. And no one took the blow more personally, or mourned for the dead Admiral more sincerely, than the King.

* * *

1804 SAW A RECURRENCE of the King's malady. In January he caught a severe chill and was confined to his room; and once again it was a 'family squabble' which deranged a mind, now so susceptible to collapse under unusual strain. The King's refusal to make him a General maddened the headstrong Prince, and in a fit of pique he published the correspondence which had passed between him and his father, his brother and Addington. The Prince's conduct was defended then, as it has been since: he was a much-wronged son, his friends averred; and the King's refusal to give him military employment could not be justified on any grounds. This is not the place to discuss the ethics of family behaviour: it is sufficient to say that the knowledge that his letters were made public by his own son, and the gout which appears to have followed the chill, brought on another attack

of insanity. He was as ill as he had ever been ; and by the middle of February it was widely rumoured that his life was in danger —which, indeed, seems to have been the case. On February 15th Fox wrote to his friend Charles, Lord Grey :

The King is as ill as in the worst moments of 1788. I think I *know* this, and the bulletin, indeed, does not deny it. “*Much indisposed*” yesterday, and “*much the same*,” to-day. Some are of opinion that his dissolution is certain and near. . . .

But actually, if Malmesbury’s evidence is to be believed, the crisis in the King’s health was in January and not February as Fox and others believed.

By February 20th, however, the King had taken a turn for the better. In his Diary Charles Abbot, who was Speaker of the House of Commons and deserves mention as the introducer of the first Census Act, recorded on that day :

The King is recovering fast, and had yesterday a long interval of reason and composure, but has every day the strait waistcoat. He had always expressed an opinion, when well, that the Willises used him with unnecessary rigour. He submits cheerfully to the restraints which he believes to be necessary, and is perfectly contented under the management of Dr Simmons of St Luke’s Hospital, who now attends him.

By the end of the month the medical advisers decided that the King was well enough to deal with State business, though Addington was warned that rest was still needed if the recovery was to be ‘complete.’

While the King lay crazed and helpless in his palace the Addington Administration was running the gauntlet in the House of Commons. Fox, who had for a time given ‘the Doctor’ a half-hearted support against attacks from Pitt’s friends, could now boast that he had ‘great pleasure in hunting down this ignoble fellow [Addington].’ The ministerial inefficiency, only too clearly revealed by Addington’s war policy, forced Pitt at last to realize that whatever promise of support he had made in the past it was now his duty to his King and Country to stand forth as a critic of the Government. It is certain that this decision caused him considerable mental anguish : he did not have to be reminded that his attacks in the Commons would be most bitterly resented

by both George and Addington, and in the former's case might aggravate the derangement of his mind. But where duty was concerned Pitt was neither a coward nor a courtier: his attacks were at first delivered somewhat half-heartedly but they were eventually driven home with all the force of his magnificent eloquence. On March 19th Malmesbury noted that Pitt 'misses few opportunities of exposing the present men.' A month later Fox wrote to Grey:

IF Pitt plays fair, we shall run him [Addington] very hard indeed on my motion, and in one or two more give him his death blow, unless he runs away first. . . . I have not written my *IF* in great letters for nothing. . . . It is impossible not to suspect Pitt from his ways of proceeding, and yet his interest is so evident that I think he will do right.

At the back of Fox's mind was the belief that Pitt meant others to deliver the 'death blow,' and then to benefit by it.

Addington saw that he could never withstand an attack led by two such brilliant parliamentarians as Fox and Pitt; and about the middle of April 'the Doctor' made overtures to the latter. Grenville wrote on April 19th:

. . . Addington . . . had sent a message to him [Pitt] to desire to know whether he was willing to state, through any common friend, what his opinions were as to the present state of things, and the steps to be taken for carrying on the King's affairs.

Pitt's reply was a sharp closing of the door to any further overtures: he had no suggestions to make; but if the King wished to make any approach to him he would state 'his unreserved opinion as to the steps which ought to be taken for the establishment of a new Government.'

Pitt was anxious that his position should be clearly understood at the Court. On Saturday, April 21st, he wrote a long letter to the King, which was handed for delivery to Eldon—an indication that the Lord Chancellor was taking great care to ensure that the King was not being worried indiscriminately by State affairs so soon after his illness. In this letter Pitt said:

It is with great reluctance that I presume to trespass on Your Majesty's attention; but, as the view I entertain of public affairs will shortly

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render it my indispensable duty in Parliament to declare more fully and explicitly than I have done hitherto my opinions on the conduct of your Majesty's present Ministers, I cannot help feeling a most anxious wish previously to lay those opinions before your Majesty.

Having stated what his intentions were he went on to explain why it was that he proposed to withdraw his support from the Government.

The experience of now nearly twelve months, and the observation of all the different measures which have been suggested or adopted by Government, and of the mode in which they have been executed, have at length impressed me with a full conviction that while the administration remains in its present shape, and particularly under the direction of the person now holding the chief place in it, every attempt to provide adequately and effectually for the public defence, and for meeting the extraordinary and unprecedented efforts of the enemy, will be fruitless. . . . With this impression, I consider the time has arrived when it is my indispensable duty, both to your Majesty and to the country, to avow these opinions, and to regulate by them my Parliamentary conduct.

The letter was not handed to the King by Eldon until April 27th.

In the meantime the battle had been joined in Parliament. On April 23rd Fox's motion—that a committee of the House should be set up to review and revise the Government's measures for national defence—was introduced in the Commons. Pitt spoke strongly against the Government. Two days later he repeated his strictures on Addington's lack of policy. The Government held its own, but Addington was bound to note with alarm that his majorities were diminishing, and on the 26th he saw the King to acquaint him that the present position was untenable. In the background was Eldon who wished to avoid any violent political crisis, knowing that it must adversely affect the King's health; and sharing Pitt's conviction that something must be done to strengthen the Government he undertook the delicate task of intermediary between the Royal Closet and Pitt's house in York Place. On May 2nd, therefore, Pitt wrote a letter to Eldon in which he detailed his view of 'the nature and description of administration which appears to be most conducive to His Majesty's service': it had already been decided that the

letter should be laid before the King. The crux of Pitt's proposals lay in the formation of a coalition.

My opinion [he said] is founded on the strong conviction that the present critical situation of this country, connected with that of Europe in general, and with the state of the political parties at home, renders it more important and essential than perhaps at any other period that ever existed to endeavour to give the greatest possible strength and energy to His Majesty's Government, by endeavouring to unite in his service as large a proportion as possible of the weight of talents and connexions, drawn without exception from parties of all descriptions, and without reference to former differences and divisions. There seems the greatest reason to hope that the circumstances of the present moment are peculiarly favourable to such a union, and that it might now be possible [with His Majesty's gracious approbation] to bring all persons of leading influence either in Parliament or in the country to concur heartily in a general system formed for the purpose of extricating this country from its present difficulties, and endeavouring, if possible, to rescue Europe from the state to which it is reduced.

Pitt used two powerful arguments in favour of such an arrangement. First, as the struggle against Napoleon must be long and arduous it could only be successfully undertaken by a united people. A strong Government containing members of all parties and not 'thwarted' by any powerful opposition either within or outside Parliament would win the confidence of Europe; and would therefore assist in uniting the European Powers again 'for reducing the power of France within limits consistent with the safety of other States.' Second, the unhappy condition of Ireland must be considered. Sooner or later Government would have to tackle Irish problems of considerable importance. On this head Pitt made his own position very clear. He was determined to ensure that those who served with him in a coalition should share his own determination not to 'disquiet' the King with proposals of emancipation for the Catholics. In these circumstances, therefore, he hoped that he would be allowed to consult with Grenville and Fox, so that he could submit 'for His Majesty's consideration' concrete proposals for a new Government.

The King was considerably agitated by the political crisis which had developed during his illness. When Addington on

April 26th came to tell him that he could not carry on much longer, and explained how Pitt had a few days previously made a violent attack on the Government, George was extremely angry with Pitt. He had promised to support the Government and had gone back on his word. [It should be remembered that Pitt's letter of explanation, written on the 21st, was not in George's hands until the day after the audience with Addington.] Pitt's letter of May 2nd to the Lord Chancellor, containing as it did a suggestion that he should admit to office 'the notorious Mr Fox' and others who had either resolutely opposed the Government for many years or held political opinions which were personally anathema to himself, only increased that agitation; and as a result the reply which was sent to Pitt on May 5th was testy and ungracious. After stating that he appreciated Pitt's personal attachment to his service the King went on to say:

. . . it cannot but be lamented that Mr Pitt should have taken so rooted a dislike to a gentleman who has the greatest claim to approbation from his King and Country for his most diligent and able discharge of the duties of Speaker of the House of Commons for twelve years; and of his still more handsomely coming forward [when Mr Pitt and some of his colleagues resigned their employments] to support his King and Country when the most ill-digested and dangerous proposition was brought forward by the enemies of the Established Church. His Majesty has too good an opinion of Mr Pitt to think he could have given his countenance to such a measure, had he weighed its tendency with that attention which a man of his judgement should call forth when the subject under consideration is of so serious a nature; but the King knows how strongly the then two Secretaries of State [*i.e.* Dundas and Grenville] who resigned at that period had allied themselves to the Roman Catholics: the former, by his private correspondence with a former Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, showed that he was become the follower of all the wild ideas of Mr Burke; and the other, from obstinacy, his usual dictator.

The whole tenor of Mr Fox's conduct since he quitted his seat at the Board of Treasury, when under age,¹ and more particularly at the Whig Club and other factious meetings, rendered his expulsion from the Privy Council indispensable,² and obliges the King to

¹ The King's memory here is at fault: Fox was not a minor when he held office.

² The King removed Fox's name from the Privy Council list in 1798.

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express his astonishment that Mr Pitt should one moment harbour the thought of bringing such a man before the Royal notice. To prevent the repetition of it, the King declares that if Mr Pitt persists in such an idea, or in proposing to consult Lord Grenville, His Majesty will have to deplore that he cannot avail himself of the ability of Mr Pitt with necessary restrictions. These points being understood, His Majesty does not object to Mr Pitt's forming such a plan for conducting the public business as may under all circumstances appear to be eligible; but should Mr Pitt, unfortunately, find himself unable to undertake what is here proposed, the King will in that case call for the assistance of such men as are truly attached to our happy Constitution, and not seekers of improvements which to all dispassionate men must appear to tend to the destruction of that noble fabric which is the pride of all thinking minds, and the envy of all foreign nations.

And the letter concluded with the request that, 'as far as the public service will permit,' some of the present Government should be given employment in any new Ministry.

Pitt made a dignified defence of his position. With regard to the two Secretaries of State who had resigned in 1801 he told the King plainly that 'they were guided on that important occasion by very different motives from those which your Majesty has been led to impute to them'; and he repeated that so far as he himself was concerned the question of Roman Catholic Emancipation would never be resuscitated out of respect for the royal wishes. It was a matter of 'extreme regret' that the King had rejected his advice to form a coalition, and he begged that he might be allowed personally to state his case to the King.

Unless Your Majesty should so far honour me with your confidence as to admit me into your presence for this purpose, I am grieved to say that I cannot retain any hope that my feeble services can be employed in any manner advantageous to Your Majesty's affairs, or satisfactory to my own mind.

Such was Pitt's ultimatum.

The King had come to the parting of the ways. Either he must see Pitt or make some other arrangements for strengthening Addington's hopelessly unstable Administration. Undoubtedly it was Eldon who persuaded him that the former was the better line of action to take; and on May 7th the Lord Chancellor

brought Pitt to Buckingham House to confer with the King. Pitt was gravely concerned lest the interview should agitate the King's mind and perhaps bring on another attack of madness: he could not forget that the King himself held that their previous disagreement had been responsible for his breakdown in 1801. As they drove from York Place to Buckingham House Pitt more than once sought assurances from Eldon. Was he sure that the King was well enough to talk business? To set Pitt's mind at rest Eldon suggested that he [Pitt] should consult the doctors at Buckingham House before going in to see the King. This Pitt did: the doctors were emphatically of the opinion that the King was well enough to stand the strain of the forthcoming interview.

For three hours George and Pitt talked together. Pitt was most cordially received.

PITT. I must congratulate Your Majesty on looking better now than on your recovery from your last illness [*i.e.* the illness of 1801].

THE KING. That is not to be wondered at. I was then on the point of parting from an old friend; I am now about to regain one.

But as the discussion proceeded Pitt found that on the question of Fox's admission to office the King's mind was made up. At the outset he had even opposed the admission of Dundas and Grenville; but Pitt had talked him out of this objection. But Fox—never: though it is said that out of deference to Pitt's wishes to make the coalition as representative as possible he would not object to Fox receiving diplomatic employment—possibly as Ambassador to Russia.

Never in any conversation I have had in my life with him has he so baffled me.

Pitt's observation after the audience was a tribute to the King's ability to stand up for his opinions and a complete denial of the rumours manufactured at Carlton House that the King was still mentally deficient.

Every one thought that Fox behaved 'most handsomely' when he was informed of Pitt's failure to persuade the King to admit him to office.

I myself am too old to care now about office [he said], but I have many friends who for years have followed me. I shall advise them now to join Government, and I trust Pitt can give them places.

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Fox was as good as his word : he urged his followers to support the Government. But Grenville, on the other hand, was, as the King observed, an obstinate man ; and he categorically refused to serve with Pitt unless a place was found for Fox. Pitt was furious with Grenville, as well he might be, for Grenville and Fox had only recently come together again after a long period of opposition to each other's interpretation of Whiggism ; and in the hearing of Eldon he remarked that 'he would teach that proud man [Grenville] that, in the service and with the confidence of the King, he could do without him, though he thought his health such that it might cost him his life.' Grenville's defection was a serious blow to Pitt's plan to form an Administration on 'a broad bottom' : his choice of Ministers must now be restricted to his own followers and those of the Addington Government who were both willing and fit to serve in a new Ministry.

George had often been criticized for his refusal to admit Fox to office in May 1804. Macaulay referred to it as 'Royal obstinacy' : this is the generally accepted Whig point of view. That the exclusion of Fox weakened Pitt's Administration¹ cannot be denied ; but whether the two men would have worked well together is at least doubtful. It is well to remember that George had suffered, or thought he had suffered, much at Fox's hands. For many years Fox had championed that species of Liberty

¹ The chief members of Pitt's Second Administration were :

- First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer : Mr WILLIAM Pitt.
- *Lord Chancellor : Earl of Eldon.
- *Lord Privy Seal : Earl of Westmoreland.
- *Lord President of the Council : Duke of Portland.
- Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs : Baron Harrowby.
- *Secretary of State for Home Affairs : Baron Hawkesbury.
- Secretary of State for War and Colonies : Earl Camden.
- *Master-General of the Ordnance : Earl of Chatham.
- First Lord of the Admiralty : Viscount Melville.
- *President of the Board of Control : Viscount Castlereagh.
- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster : Baron Mulgrave.
- President of the Board of Trade : Duke of Montrose.

*The above formed the Cabinet : those indicated by * were members of Addington's Administration.*

Other office-holders were :

- Treasurer of the Navy : Mr George Canning.
- Secretary at War : Mr William Dundas.
- Paymasters of the Forces : Mr George Rose and Lord Charles Somerset.
- Attorney-General : Mr Spencer Perceval.
- Solicitor-General : Sir Vickary Gibbs.

which in France sent countless innocent people to the guillotine : he had gone out of his way to embarrass and insult his King : he had played to the gallery ; and George detested that more than anything else in a public man. But his aversion was more deeply founded than in Fox's public behaviour : he was convinced that ' dear Charles ' had debauched his eldest son ; and not content with this had turned him against his father and mother. The King's hatred of Fox was largely the outcome of a father's sorrow at the unprincely behaviour of a son.

It has often been argued that had Pitt stuck to his guns he could have forced the King to admit Fox to office. This is a speculation. Hopelessly weak and unstable though Addington's position was it must not be forgotten that he still commanded a majority in the House of Commons ; and although that majority under Pitt's and Fox's attacks had been considerably reduced it had not been dissipated when Pitt came forward with his proposals to strengthen the Government by substituting the much-to-be-desired Coalition for Addington's Administration. How long Addington could have maintained his position, whether he himself had the necessary courage to fight on or could have of his own accord strengthened his position by a re-shuffle of the Cabinet, are arguable matters which lead nowhere.

It was during the summer of 1804 that an attempt was made to heal the breach between the King and his eldest son. The Prince wrote to his mother and sisters to ask them to plead with his father to grant him an interview.

Were this allowed me [he said] I should fly to throw myself at the King's feet, and offer him the testimony of my ever unvarying attachment. I have long grieved that misrepresentations have estranged His Majesty's mind from me, and the most anxious wish of my heart is for the opportunity of dispelling that coldness. Every consideration renders this distance most severely painful. My first object is the gratification of the feelings of affection, leaving all else to the spontaneous dictates of my father's kindness ; and, if any public view can mingle with this sentiment, it is the incalculable importance to His Majesty and the country, of the whole Royal Family appearing united in a moment so awful as the present.

Whether the King had any right to doubt his son's sincerity it is hard to say ; but doubt it he did. He could not forget that his son had published his letters in the public Press, that he had

behaved abominably to his mother on many occasions, that he had allied himself with the Opposition as it would appear merely to embarrass the Government, that he had befouled his fair name with the grossest indecencies and most disgusting debaucheries. Both Eldon and Pitt pleaded with the King to be generous: they urged that it was in the public interest that bygones should be bygones; and eventually the King gave way. In a letter to Eldon, written on August 20th, he said:

. . . His Majesty is willing to receive the Prince of Wales on Wednesday at Kew, provided no explanation or excuses are attempted to be made by the Prince of Wales, but that it is merely to be a visit of civility; as any retrospect could but oblige the King to utter truths which, instead of healing, must widen the present breach. His Majesty will have the Queen, the Princesses, and at least one of his sons, the Duke of Cambridge, present on the occasion.

But the interview did not take place: although the Prince wrote to say that he would come to Kew and arrangements were made to receive him, when the day came round he sent a message to the effect that he was too unwell to make the journey. It was then that the King's graciousness returned: he commanded the Lord Chancellor 'to express to the Prince of Wales his sorrow at his being unwell'; and at the same time it was intimated that the interview could take place when the King returned from his annual holiday at Weymouth. How much better it would have been had George only written a personal note to his son!

As usual the King derived great benefit from his stay at Weymouth; and when he called to see George Rose at *Cuffnells* at the end of October he was in the best of spirits. He talked freely to his host, explaining frankly to him why he had acted in such and such a way, or come to such and such a decision in the past; and the record of those conversations, preserved in Rose's *Diarie*s, throws a powerful light on the King's character. But, at the same time, there were not wanting indications that his health was breaking, perhaps more rapidly than either he or his friends then realized; and it is significant that in the following January he delivered for the last time in person the Speech from the Throne in Parliament. By July 1805 he was almost blind as the result of cataract; but he bore his affliction with the greatest patience and fortitude; and although he continued to take the

liveliest interest in public affairs he could no longer read or write letters.

All this time Pitt was bravely struggling along to put his country in a position to lead the struggle against Napoleon. He was still convinced that a coalition, which was truly representative of all parties, was the surest way to success at home and abroad; and once again he ventured to broach the subject of Fox's admission to the Government to the King. In the summer he travelled to Weymouth to state his case; but he found George as determined as ever not to admit 'that man' into the ministerial circle. The King had already stated that he would risk a civil war sooner than give way on the question; and Pitt, realizing that pressure on his royal master would only result in another mental breakdown, withdrew greatly disappointed to Town.

Pitt was then a very sick man. His health had never been robust, and towards the end of 1804 his friends saw that the strain of public service was telling seriously upon him. His doctors urged him to rest as much as possible, and to go to Bath to take the waters. But how could he rest when Europe was crying out for leadership against the newly styled Emperor of the French? Great Britain had a duty to Europe, and it was Pitt's business to see that this duty was loyally and effectively performed. He was resolved to bring Napoleon down from the dizzy heights to which his boundless ambition had driven him, and to restore once again the old equilibrium of power in Europe. Now and again he snatched a few brief days to do as the doctors bade him and go to Bath; but it was too late to check the disease which was eventually to kill him. In 1805 it was Pitt's misfortune to experience a great sorrow: he had to stand by and watch a cunningly-planned attack successfully delivered against the honour of an old friend—Melville [Dundas]. Melville was charged with having appropriated to his own use Admiralty funds. Pitt was convinced that the charges were groundless, but he was nevertheless compelled to agree to the appointment of a committee of inquiry into Melville's conduct at the Admiralty. It was Addington [as Viscount Sidmouth he had recently joined the Government as Lord President of the Council], who drove Pitt to this decision: he had threatened to resign unless the charges against Melville were thoroughly investigated. When the Speaker gave his casting vote for the motion of censure great tears trickled down Pitt's

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cheeks, and thoughtfully screened by a number of his younger followers he left the House in a state of abject misery. He had had already to advise the King to remove Melville's name from the list of Privy Councillors; and knowing of the friendship which had existed between the two men the King tried his best to soften the blow. In his letter to Pitt, written on May 5th, 1805, he said :

Though the King is much hurt at the virulence against Lord Melville, which is unbecoming the character of Englishmen, who naturally when a man is fallen are too noble to pursue their blows, he must feel the prudence and good temper of Mr Pitt's proposing his being struck out of the Privy Council, and it is hoped after that the subject will be buried in oblivion.

As the year wore on Pitt was made more and more conscious that his efforts to stem the tide of the Napoleonic advance were not meeting with very great success; and despite the fact that at Trafalgar Nelson had shattered one of the French Emperor's fondest hopes—the subjugation of Great Britain—it was Pitt's painful experience to observe that the other European Powers were cowed by Napoleon's military genius.

He went to Bath to recuperate; and it was while he was there that he learnt of the defeat of the Austrians at Austerlitz on December 2nd. It was a blow from which he was destined never to recover; and after a painful three days of travelling he was brought home to Putney on January 12th, 1806. On entering his house he noticed a map of Europe hanging on the wall; and it was then that he made his famous remark :

Roll up that map, it will not be wanted these ten years.

Nothing could now save him, for after Austerlitz he had lost the courage to live; and in the early hours of January 23rd he breathed his last, murmuring shortly before he died :

Oh, my country ! How I leave my country !

Those words were a fitting epilogue of a life lived in the service of King and Country.

* * *

PITT'S DEATH BROUGHT great sorrow to the King. For nearly nineteen years they had been in the closest touch with each other;

and their association, except during the time when the proposal to relieve the Catholics was under discussion, had been a most happy and successful one. George knew that from Pitt he would receive that service which every monarch has the right to expect from his First Minister. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that when the King heard of Pitt's death he broke down completely; and for two days he mourned for him alone, refusing to see any of the Ministers.

Sorrow is not allowed to intrude too much into the life of a king; and now that Pitt was no longer at the head of the nation's affairs it was George's duty to find a successor. Hawkesbury was his first choice: it is true that he had no great opinion of the Home Secretary, but he hoped that his influence might be sufficiently great to keep the Ministers together. But Hawkesbury refused: he was, so he said, not equal to the task. There was no other course open for the King but to send for Grenville; and when they met on January 27th the latter immediately said that he would only form a Government provided that Fox was allowed to be one of its members.

There are to be no exclusions.

Grenville can hardly have expected these words from the King. In due course the new Ministry¹ was formed; and for the

¹ The chief members of the Grenville-Fox Administration were:

- First Lord of the Treasury: BARON GRENVILLE.
- *Chancellor of the Exchequer: Lord Henry Petty.
- *Lord Chancellor: Baron Erskine.
- Lord Privy Seal: Viscount Sidmouth.
- *Lord President of the Council: Earl FitzWilliam.
- Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: Mr Charles J. Fox.
- †Secretary of State for Home Affairs: Earl Spencer.
- *Secretary of State for War and Colonies: Mr William Windham.
- *Master-General of the Ordnance: Earl of Moira.
- *First Lord of the Admiralty: Viscount Howick.
- President of the Board of Control: Earl of Minto.
- *Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster: Earl of Derby.
- President of the Board of Trade: Baron Auckland.
- *Treasurer of the Navy: Mr Richard B. Sheridan.
- *Secretary at War: General Fitzpatrick.
- *†Paymasters of the Forces: Earl Temple and Lord John Townshend.
- *Attorney-General: Mr Arthur L. Pigott.
- *Solicitor-General: Mr Samuel Romilly.

* Indicates followers of Fox.

† Indicates followers of Grenville.

Some of Sidmouth's followers were also given office.

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King the hardest part was the meeting with Fox, whose admission to office he had so resolutely opposed in Pitt's last years.

At the period of Mr Fox's return to power the King—then in full possession of his faculties—showed for several days considerable uneasiness of mind. A cloud seemed to overhang his spirits. On his return one day from London the cloud was evidently removed, and His Majesty, on entering the room where the Queen and the Princess Augusta were, said he had news to tell them. “I have taken Mr Fox for my Minister, and on the whole am satisfied with the arrangement.” . . . When Mr Fox came into the closet for the first time, His Majesty purposely made a short pause, and then said—“Mr Fox, I little thought you and I should ever meet again in this place. But I have no desire to look back upon old grievances, and you may rest assured I shall never remind you of them.” Mr Fox replied—“My deeds, and not my words, shall commend me to Your Majesty.”

Such was Princess Augusta's account of their meeting in the early days of February 1806.

Times had changed, and both the King and Fox had changed with them. The fates decreed, it is true, that their association should be a short one, but it was long enough for each to appreciate the other's good qualities and sterling worth. Indeed, if Fox's secretary is to be believed, the King quickly came to admire the business-like way in which the new Foreign Secretary went about his business. Wrote the secretary—Mr Trotter :

His Majesty, who was always extremely regular and punctual in the discharge of his own high duties, said that the office had never been conducted in such a manner before, and expressed much satisfaction at Mr Fox's mode of doing business. . . . With his mode of conducting a negotiation he was much pleased. His despatches obtained even His Majesty's admiration, as of official writing there was no better judge.

What of Catholic Emancipation, the cause which Fox had championed so fiercely as the leader of the Opposition? Like Pitt, Fox had come to recognize that a politician was bound to respect even a King's prejudices when those prejudices were based upon a conception of duty towards his God; and he confessed soon after he came into power that he was ‘determined not to annoy my Sovereign’ by bringing forward any measures of relief for the Catholics.

Mr Fox's manner contrasted remarkably with that of another of his Whig Ministers, who, when he came into office, walked up to him in the way he should have expected from Buonaparte after the battle of Austerlitz.

Fox's graciousness and charm of manner were notoriously infectious; and for the first time the King probably came to understand how it was that his Foreign Minister had gained such an ascendancy over the Heir to the Throne.

Unfortunately early in June Fox's health gave way. At first the doctors believed that the trouble was only rheumatism—a natural retribution for one who drank port wine as freely as Fox; but before the month was out they discovered that he was seriously ill with dropsy; and urged him to take things as easily as possible. Fox would not listen to their warnings or the pleadings of his political friends: he had undertaken to serve his King and country, and he would do so even though it cost him his life. His cheerfulness during a painful illness was remarkable: he entertained with his customary cordiality, and when not engaged with tedious details of State business he solaced his mind—with Vergil; and his deep concern for the future of 'Liz,' the woman who had been his mistress and was now his wife, was pathetically beautiful. On September 13th he died; and a month later they bore his body to rest in Westminster Abbey, his grave being next to that of William Pitt.

A good Whig like Lord Holland left it on record that the King 'could hardly suppress his indecent exultation at' Fox's death. What his motive can have been for such a gross misrepresentation no one can say. George was too deeply religious to indulge in 'indecent exultation' in the presence of Death. Another Whig, more generous than Holland and almost certainly better informed about happenings at Court, relates how when the news of Fox's death was brought to Kew the King gravely remarked that 'the country could then ill afford to lose such a man'; and on September 14th he confessed to his friend, Sidmouth, that he little thought that he would 'ever live to regret Mr Fox's death.' That he could not mourn for Fox as he had mourned for Pitt was only natural: their association had been a very different one; but with his keen judgement of character and ability he had so appreciated Fox's outstanding qualities that he must have wished that they had been used more loyally in his service.

By a strange coincidence one of the first tasks which the Grenville-Fox Administration—it was better known as ‘The Ministry of All the Talents’—had to tackle was concerned with the Prince of Wales’s private affairs. His marriage to his cousin, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick, had been a failure. They had shared the same bed on their wedding night in April 1795, and then immediately drifted apart; but on January 7th, 1796, a child was born to them—the Princess Charlotte; and she remained under her mother’s care. At the end of 1804 the King and Prince were at loggerheads over the education of the little Princess. She was in the direct line of succession to the Throne; and the King was eager to ensure that his grand-daughter was properly equipped for dealing with the arduous duties of queenship. At the beginning of 1806 a scandalous story was circulated to the effect that the Princess of Wales had given birth to a child. If there was any truth in the story then it would be immediately necessary to take the Princess Charlotte away from her mother; and the Prince of Wales urged his father and the Ministers to lose no time in examining the story. Four commissioners were thereupon appointed to conduct what was popularly called ‘the Indelicate Investigation.’ They found that the Princess of Wales had in 1802 adopted a little boy called William Austin, who was the son of the man who turned the mangle in her wash-house; and although easily convinced that there was no truth in the story of the Princess having given birth to a child they found it more difficult to discount the fact that the Princess’s behaviour was often most indiscreet and indecorous. Her language was often as coarse as her husband’s—and being a woman it was not permitted for her to give tongue to indecencies which when uttered by the Prince were roundly applauded as wit. But what could be done? The Princess was innocent of the charge levelled against her; and consequently they could not take her child from her.

That the investigation caused the King considerable worry and annoyance is not to be wondered at. Once again the affairs of his family were made public property; and he was very proud of his family. Kindly but firmly he wrote to tell his daughter-in-law that he ‘never could but regard with serious concern’ her conduct. In his own family circle his language was even stronger: the ‘Princess could not be received as an Intimate in his Family

and no nearer intercourse could he admit than outward marks of Civility.' So the Princess of Wales was refused the right to attend the Court; and at once her friends were loud in their condemnation of the attitude which the King had taken up. One of her staunchest friends was Spencer Perceval: it was he who penned her spirited replies to her father-in-law—replies which were eventually published; and his championship of her cause gave the incident a political flavour, for the Tory friends of Perceval lost no time in allying themselves with him. The result was disastrous from the point of view of the Princess of Wales: in the eyes of the King she had become 'a female politician,' and as such she forfeited his sympathy.

Fox's untimely death had necessitated a reorganization of the Ministry. Howick left his place at the Admiralty to become Foreign Secretary; and he was succeeded as First Lord by Thomas Grenville. Sidmouth was made Lord President of the Council, a post which was vacant owing to FitzWilliam's resignation; and Holland was brought in as Lord Privy Seal. But the team was weaker than it had been when Fox was in it, a fact which the King himself noted; and Howick's advancement to one of the principal positions in the Government was bound to strengthen the hands of those Ministers who still aimed at bringing peace to a distracted Ireland by means of relief for the Catholics.

The King had undergone a treatment for the cataract on his eyes; and during 1806 his sight was so much improved that he was cheerfully confident that there was no longer any danger of blindness. But his hopes were dashed to the ground when shortly before Christmas his two eyes were attacked by a severe inflammation, which the doctors were quite unable to relieve; and as his vision became more and more restricted so did his spirits fall. Early in 1807 his Ministers found him listless and apathetic. There was no sign of the old mental trouble, but it was only with the greatest difficulty that he could be induced to attend to the routine business of State. His listlessness and apathy quickly vanished, however, when in February and March, the old question of relief for the Catholics was revived.

The Government proposed by means of a clause in the Mutiny Bill to allow Catholic officers serving in the Army in England and Scotland the right to rise to the rank of Colonel—a right which incidentally was already enjoyed by Catholics serving in

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the Army in Ireland. This seemed innocent enough; and the King, admittedly apprehensive lest the proposal should presage a more ambitious scheme of relief, gave his consent to the clause. On February 12th he wrote to Grenville:

The King has maturely considered what is stated in Lord Grenville's letter of the 10th instant, and the accompanying minute of the Cabinet. He is disposed in this, as in all other instances, to do full justice to the motives which influence any advice which may be submitted to him by Lord Grenville and his other confidential servants; and however painful His Majesty has found it to reconcile to his feelings the removal of objections to any proposal which may have even the most distant reference to a question which has already been the subject of such frequent and distressing reflection, he will not under the circumstances in which he is so earnestly pressed, and adverting particularly to what passed in 1791, prevent his Ministers submitting to the consideration of Parliament the propriety of inserting the proposed clause in the Mutiny Bill. While, however, the King so far reluctantly concedes, he considers it necessary to declare that he cannot go one step further; and he trusts that this proof of his forbearance will secure him from being at a future period distressed by any further proposal connected with this question.

The King had conceded much—but not nearly enough for a section in the Cabinet. The members of this group were determined, as one of them admitted in a letter:

To give all his subjects, of whatever persuasion, the capacity of serving in his Army or Navy, with no exception or condition whatever than that of taking an oath of allegiance; these words being calculated to allow Catholics or Dissenters to enjoy the same military or naval rank as Protestants.

And this spirit animated the proposal inserted in the Mutiny Bill.

The Bill was duly submitted to the King; but apparently he did not read it; and when it was returned to the Prime Minister it was not unnaturally supposed that the proposal met with the King's approval. But the Cabinet was not unanimous on this question: Sidmouth and some of his friends shared the King's original fears that it was but the beginning of further innovations; and not only was Grenville informed that the Bill would be opposed from the Government benches, but Sidmouth in an

interview communicated his fears to the King, who was greatly put out by what he heard. When Howick came to see him shortly after Sidmouth had left the Royal Closet the King repeated his aversion to any proposal which would give a general relief to his Catholic subjects; and in view of this utterance it was not surprising that he should be greatly angered when he found that the Bill had been introduced into Parliament in spite of his protests. He saw Grenville, and in effect hinted that he had been tricked into consenting to the Government's proposal: it was then that he suggested that to avoid 'all future mistakes' it would be safer if the Ministers 'stated on paper' their proposals! On March 11th in an audience at Buckingham House the Ministers were told in the plainest language that the King could never consent to the Bill before Parliament; and on the following day he received a letter from Portland in which the Duke urged him to effect a change of government.

. . . he [the Duke] humbly considers it his duty to suggest to his Majesty the advisableness of taking the conduct of his affairs out of the hands of his present Ministers, and trusting to the nation to support him in the defence of the established laws of the realm.

And the Duke concluded that he was ready to head a new Government, if the King so wished.

For the moment the King ignored Portland's offer. On the 15th the Cabinet met to discuss the situation. They were prepared to drop the Bill, and said so in a Minute, which was to be transmitted to the King. But the Minute also contained an ominous threat.¹

Their opinions they [the signatories] have never concealed from Your Majesty; they continue strongly impressed with them, and it is obviously indispensable to their public character that they should openly avow them, both on the present occasion and in the possible event of the discussion of the Catholic petition in Parliament: a discussion which they have all equally endeavoured to prevent; in which [if it should be forced upon them] there might not be a perfect uniformity of conduct between them, but in which an adherence in them all to their former opinions must naturally be declared.

¹ The Minute was signed by Grenville, Howick, Moira, Petty, Windham and Thomas Grenville.

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Two days later the King sent his reply to this Minute. He was glad to find that the Bill was to be dropped, and stated his appreciation of the way in which the Ministers had respected his own feelings in this matter; but he was bound to regret that his Ministers reserved to themselves the right to raise at any time matters which they knew were 'so decidedly contrary to his principles'; and he therefore concluded with a re-statement of his own case.

The King, therefore, considers it due to himself, and consistent with the fair and upright conduct which it has been and ever will be his object to observe towards every one, to declare at once, most unequivocally, that upon this subject his sentiments never can change; that he cannot even agree to any concessions to the Catholics which his confidential servants may in future ever propose to him; and that under these circumstances, and after what has passed, his mind cannot be at ease unless he shall receive a positive assurance from them which shall effectually relieve him from all future apprehensions.

Such an assurance Grenville and his friends felt that they could not give. In the evening of the 17th, the day on which the King had sent his reply to their Minute, they met in Spencer's house to draft a further Minute. It closed the door to any possible adjustment of the situation.

. . . They beg leave to represent to Your Majesty, that at the time when Your Majesty was graciously pleased to call them to your councils, no assurance was required from them inconsistent with those duties which are inseparable from that station. Had any such assurance been then demanded, they must have expressed with all humility and duty the absolute impossibility of their thus fettering the free exercise of their judgement. Those who are entrusted by Your Majesty with the administration of your extensive empire, are bound by every obligation to submit to Your Majesty, without reserve, the best advice which they can frame to meet the various exigencies and dangers of the times.

On the following day Grenville went to the King to explain the position which he and his colleagues had taken up; and without resentment or rancour told George that they could never withdraw from the position. 'Then I must look about me,' said the King.

INTO THE SHADOWS

On the 19th he received Eldon and Hawkesbury: to them he detailed the events which had led up to the crisis; and was greatly concerned to know whether or not they approved of the line of action which he had taken. When they said that they did the King was greatly overjoyed; and he went on to tell them how he had conducted 'the business on his own,' not even asking the Archbishop of Canterbury's advice on the question of concessions to the Catholics. Finally he commanded them to ask Portland to form an Administration.

I have [he said] no restrictions, no exceptions to lay on the Duke; no engagements or promises. He may dispose of everything. . . .

Sick man though he was, the Duke consented; and in due course laid his proposals¹ before the King. It was not a strong team that he had got together; but it was sound; and in Canning and Castlereagh had two members of more than average ability.

Grenville's dismissal gave rise to a considerable amount of criticism. His more extreme followers persisted in hinting that there existed some 'power behind the throne'—an allusion to Eldon and Hawkesbury; and in Parliament a resolution was moved to the effect that it was unconstitutional for Ministers to give pledges which must restrict their advice to the crown. But the tale of a 'power behind the throne' was an old one; and, as the King himself told Eldon and Hawkesbury, he had handled the situation without any outside assistance, confident that he was interpreting the wishes of the country. And judging from the number of petitions applauding his defence of 'the Establishment' he could justly claim that his conduct was popularly approved. Not all Grenville's colleagues were in agreement with his refusal

¹ The chief members of Portland's Administrations were:

- First Lord of the Treasury: DUKE OF PORTLAND.
- Chancellor of the Exchequer: Mr Spencer Perceval.
- Lord Chancellor: Earl of Eldon.
- Lord Privy Seal: Earl of Westmoreland.
- Lord President of the Council: Earl Camden.
- Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: Mr Canning.
- Secretary of State for Home Affairs: Baron Hawkesbury.
- Secretary of State for War and Colonies: Viscount Castlereagh.
- Master-General of the Ordnance: Earl of Chatham.
- First Lord of the Admiralty: Baron Mulgrave.
- President of the Board of Trade: Earl Bathurst.
- Attorney-General: Sir Vickary Gibbs.

to compromise. Sheridan, who had a very comfortable and lucrative position as Treasurer of the Navy, is said acidly to have observed :

I have known many men knock their heads against a wall; but I never before heard of a man collecting bricks and building a wall for the express purpose of knocking out his own brains against it!

Sheridan knew that his old friend Charles Fox would never have gone to such an extreme.

* * *

THE PORTLAND MINISTRY did its best to grapple with the difficulties which confronted it at home and abroad. July 1807 saw Napoleon's power soaring to its zenith at Tilsit, when on a raft anchored mid-stream in the Niemen he and Alexander of Russia agreed to divide the world between them; but already the British had begun to wage that economic war against Europe, which more than anything else was destined to bring the Napoleonic system in Europe into disrepute. It is true that the nation suffered grievously in these efforts to break the French Emperor's power. The high price of corn brought suffering into the homes of the poor. There was, it is true, a widespread desire for peace, but it was almost universally agreed that it must be 'peace with honour.'

Throughout 1808 the blind King led a quiet life, chiefly at Windsor. Speaker Abbot, who saw him on January 20th, noted in his Diary that he 'looked remarkably well' and was 'very cheerful,' but that he had 'grown rather large within the last twelvemonth.' He took the keenest interest in the progress of the war in Europe, and was as determined as ever he had been that it must be prosecuted relentlessly until the power of 'the Corsican adventurer' was completely shattered. Sorrow, however, intruded itself into his life when at the end of May came the news that his old friend Bishop Hurd had died in his home at Worcester at the age of eighty-nine: he was greatly cheered when at the same time it was told him that his eldest son, not long before, had visited his old preceptor.

In 1809 misfortunes, public and private, crowded in upon the King. On January 23rd the country learnt with dismay of the defeat and death of Sir John More outside Coruña. Heavy

though the blow was, we are told that the King took it with ‘true courage and firmness, supported by a mind conscious of virtue, patriotism and rectitude.’ Worse, however, was to follow; for four days later Colonel Wardle, the Member for Oakhampton, rose in his place in the House of Commons formally to charge the Duke of York with corrupt practices ‘in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief, with regard to appointments, promotions, exchanges, the raising of new levies and the general state of the Army.’ Wardle’s friends in the Opposition, shouting lustily a battle-cry of ‘Corruption in High Places,’ urged the appointment of a committee of inquiry; and the Government, chiefly at Castlereagh’s instigation, offered no objection to such a course of action.

Unfortunately the case against the Duke centred round his mistress, Mrs Clarke. It was conclusively proved that this woman had taken money on the ground that she could influence promotions in the Army: it was never proved that any of the money had found its way into the Duke’s pockets, or that he was even aware of what his ‘Darling’ was doing. For days London battened on the ‘revelations’ which were made during the inquiry in Parliament; and in fashionable drawing-room and dingy tap-room the intimate affairs of ‘Duke and Darling’ were discussed with great gusto. However, on March 17th the Duke was exonerated by a majority of 82 votes; but the damage to his reputation had been done; and there was no alternative but for him to resign his appointment as Commander-in-Chief.

The whole business grieved the King; but outwardly he stood by his favourite son. Much as he himself deplored his association with the ‘Clarke woman’ he was not willing to allow even that to obscure the Duke’s sterling qualities, admitted by many then and still more apparent now. At the Horse Guards the Duke had done much to improve the Army: his service, the King thought, should have received a more generous recognition from the Ministers. One of the Marquis of Buckingham’s correspondents, a Mr Freemantle, wrote on March 24th:

Every part of the Royal Family at Windsor, excepting the King, is overwhelmed with despair at the Duke of York’s business. . . . The King is said to bear it very firmly; but I have reason to believe that he is indignant at his Ministers, for having suffered it to come forward at all.

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The Duke's sister, Augusta, was highly indignant at the way in which Frederick had been persecuted.

I am also miserable to think [she wrote] that the Methodists are doing all the harm to him they can and there are many in this country, they are vile canters, cheating the devil, praying with their mouths but denying in their hearts ; and they think it will command popularity to condemn and abuse the Duke of York for what I daresay they do themselves.

Brave words though these were they hid the true feelings of 'the family'—an idol had fallen to the ground. The King might be bitterly disappointed in his favourite son : he was brutally hurt by the way in which the Prince of Wales, posing as a champion of morality, had refused to stand by his brother.

Further troubles came in the summer months. In the Government Canning and Castlereagh were openly at variance with each other ; and poor Portland, so ill with 'the stone' that he could no longer give his undivided attention to business, was quite unequal to the task of restraining his two headstrong colleagues. Canning was a forceful man ; and he wished to oust Castlereagh from the War Office in order that one of his friends, the Marquis Wellesley, might be brought into the Government. The proposal was by no means unpopular with other members of the Cabinet : Castlereagh's conduct of the war was open to criticism, which gathered considerable force when it was known that disaster after disaster was overtaking the expedition which he had sent to Walcheren. But Portland shrank from making the change, and, worse still, he kept Castlereagh in the dark about it. In September he announced his decision to resign owing to his bad state of health ; and then Canning learnt for the first time that nothing had been said to Castlereagh. He resigned at once : so did Castlereagh, who could no longer be kept in ignorance ; and as a result the two men fought a duel, during which Canning was wounded.

The King regarded the quarrel as a stupid business—which indeed it was ; and he roundly condemned both men for settling their differences in such a crude manner. The disruption in the Ministry weighed him down : he became morose and ill-tempered, and there were signs that his old mental trouble was about to return. The truth is that he was once again brought

face to face with the fear that the question of relief for the Catholics would be revived; for Perceval, to whom he had entrusted the task of re-shaping the Administration on the announcement of Portland's retirement, was firmly of the opinion that it was his duty to effect a coalition with Grenville and Howick. Reluctantly he agreed that Perceval should approach the 'two Lords.' He would not 'mix personally in' the negotiations; but he told Perceval that he 'reserved to himself, when the persons negotiating should have settled particulars, the right of approving of, or dissenting from, any of those he might think material.' And, at the same time, he impressed upon Perceval that he could never depart from the position which he had already taken up on the question of Catholic Emancipation.

The overtures made to the 'two Lords' were abortive: they would not serve under the conditions which the King had laid down, and they resented the fact that they had not been personally invited to the Court to state their case. Perceval, therefore, was compelled to patch up the Administration as best he could. He took Portland's place as First Lord of the Treasury, and retained his office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Earl of Liverpool [Hawkesbury of old] left the Home Office to become Secretary of State for War and Colonies; and Wellesley took Canning's place as Foreign Secretary. Richard Ryder, who was Lord Harrowby's younger brother, was brought in as Secretary of State for Home Affairs; and the Secretary at War was Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, who was destined to remain in that office under successive Governments until 1828.

On October 25th, 1809, the country celebrated the Jubilee of the King's reign with great rejoicing. All through the day the bells of London's churches rang out their message of loyalty. Royal salutes were fired by artillerymen in London's parks, and by sailors manning the batteries in the royal dockyards. Debtors were freed from prison, and military offenders were pardoned. The children of the poor were fed and presented with parcels of 'warm clothing.' Throughout the country it was a holiday; and in Town and Country people went to church for the service of thanksgiving which had been specially drawn up by the Archbishops and Bishops; and then adjourned to the 'feast' which was everywhere prepared, and the sports which inevitably follow such entertainments.

But the object of such loyalty and affection was grievously ill. The excitement which came with the political crisis had again affected his mind; and his ceaseless chatter and frivolous remarks caused much concern. He appeared to be better as the summer came on; but then he was called upon to bear another sorrow—the illness of his youngest child, the Princess Amelia, who was dying of consumption. He bore that burden bravely; but it was too much for him; and not long before the Princess died the King, so Rose recorded in his Diary, told her ‘that he was afraid he should’ go mad from grief, ‘and that he trusted God would give him strength to go through the trial.’ The dying Princess, with great tenderness, tried to comfort her blind father who gazed unseeingly into her face. ‘Remember me, but do not grieve for me,’ she said.

It was evident, however, that he could not withstand the strain; and Eldon and Perceval, who had visited him at the end of October, were shocked by the change which had come over the King. On November 1st, in moving the adjournment of Parliament until the 15th, Perceval made a reference to the King’s illness.

If anything could more sensibly increase those feelings of affection, and diminish those of affliction, which are by this moment felt by His Majesty’s people, it is the knowledge that his disorder has originated from his constant and unremitting anxiety and attention, during the painful and protracted sufferings of a dearly beloved child.

Yet shortly after the Princess’s death reason for a time returned to him; and although they tried to dissuade him he insisted personally in making all the arrangements for her burial.

The doctors were convinced that the King would recover: they said so emphatically when examined by the Privy Council at the end of November; but they were quite unable to agree as to how long it would be before he would be well enough to conduct the necessary business of State. When Eldon and Perceval visited him in January 1811 they found him better; and, what was more surprising, he said he was able to ‘distinguish their features.’ On January 29th, however, Perceval acquainted the King of the fact that the Government proposed to establish a regency during his illness. The news was calmly received: the King admitted that the time had come for him to retire, but at

the same time he said that he could never abdicate, and when Perceval reminded him that 'a due discharge of his kingly duties was required of him by his religious obligations,' the King tartly replied that he would 'always be at hand to come forward.' The Prime Minister did not tell him what an unseemly hullabaloo the Prince of Wales and his brothers had made when they learnt that the Regent's powers were to be circumscribed as they were to have been in 1788: that would only have increased his sorrow. On February 5th Eldon and Perceval brought the Regency Bill for him to signify his assent: they found him well and as resigned as ever; but as he signed the measure which was to deprive him of his right to play a king's part he whimsically observed that he found it as distasteful as others had found it to be deprived of office!

Unruly Family

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY revelled in scandalous tales of the private lives of the principal actors on the stage of national life; and publishers and editors, diarists and letter writers, vied with each other in pandering to the popular taste. A story of Court life was always a tit-bit of scandal. The carryings-on of George II with his fat German mistresses or the hints of an *affaire* between a Dowager-Princess of Wales and a Bute were given a disgusting prominence, which would no longer be tolerated even though they were true. The manufacturers of scandal, therefore, were greatly put out when the Throne was occupied by a prince as virtuous as George III, and after making a very futile attempt to impugn his moral character they were driven to poke fun at his simplicity of life, telling with great gusto how he wore 'woollies' which were knitted by his Queen, or how carefully the affairs of the royal household were managed under the King's personal supervision. But unfortunately there were always plenty of tales to be told about the reckless way in which his brothers and later his own sons passed their lives; and that was some sort of compensation with these nasty-minded people for the loss which they sustained in not being able to record the amours and infidelities of their King.

George was the head of a family which somehow or other was fated to throw discretion to the winds and defy the conventions which every one professed to respect but which few seemed to have obeyed in 'high society.' Naturally enough the carryings-on of young princes would attract special attention on account of their exalted rank; and consequently the wildest tales were woven round incidents which were not outrageous for those times. But the fact remains that George himself was grievously

burdened by the thoughtlessness of his own brothers and sons; and the whole family suffered much in consequence of the publicity which was given to the sordid affairs of the Princes.

Nowadays it is the custom to blame George for his sons' indiscretions. He is held up to ridicule on the ground that his conception of fatherhood was ridiculously old-fashioned even for those days; and it is stated that the 'suppressions' which were created in the home life of the Court were responsible for the reckless behaviour of the Princes in after life. He kept them short of money, and denied them the right to take any prominent part in public life. So they developed into hopeless spendthrifts, on the one hand, and disreputable rakes, on the other.

But surely the evidence all points to the fact that George was a remarkably good father? Whether he was always a wise one is perhaps doubtful; but the same can be said about many fathers even in an age which accepts vastly different standards of parental control. He undoubtedly expected from his children the same high standards of public and private behaviour as he himself maintained; and when there were departures from those standards he was perhaps not always as understanding as he might have been. That was not his fault: it was his misfortune. George was always naturally impatient of human frailty, because he himself had his own passions under such powerful control; and he could not understand why others could not do what he had done. 'Suppressions' may explain, but they hardly excuse, the behaviour of the Princes; and one could forgive them their indiscretions had they not impishly delighted in causing their father and mother distress and embarrassment by openly consorting with those politicians who were bent upon humbling their King in what they said was a defence of 'the Glorious Revolution.'

* * *

CHILDREN CAME QUICKLY to the King and Queen. Between August 12th, 1762, and August 7th, 1783, were born to them nine sons and six daughters. George, the Prince of Wales, came, as has already been noticed, in August 1762; Frederick, Duke of York and Albany in August 1763; William, Duke of Clarence and later William IV, in August 1765; Charlotte, the Princess Royal and later Queen of Würtemberg, in September 1766; Edward, Duke of Kent, in November 1767; Augusta in Novem-

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ber 1768; Elizabeth, later the Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg, in May 1770; Ernest, Duke of Cumberland and later the King of Hanover,¹ in June 1771; Augustus, Duke of Sussex, in January 1773; Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge, in February 1774; Mary, later Duchess of Gloucester, in April 1776; Sophia in November 1777; Octavius in February 1779; Alfred in September 1780; and Amelia in August 1783.

It was a serious business to accommodate such a large family. With the exception of the Prince of Wales all the children were born at Buckingham House, which after 1775 was known as the Queen's House; but Kew was the favourite 'family' residence, and when the boys grew up and were being educated they were accommodated in houses around Kew Green. After 1782 there was the Queen's Lodge at Windsor.² The great advantage of Kew was that it was reasonably private; and the children could play in the grounds to their hearts' content. But born in the purple it was inevitable that their little lives should be restricted by all the paraphernalia which was then thought to be indispensable for the proper upbringing of royal children; but in their father and mother they were fortunate in possessing parents who were never tired of ministering to their needs; and although adolescence brought cruel disruptions in the royal family life as children they appear to have been a very happy family.

On Thursdays the royal residence at Kew was thrown open to the public; and the visiting Londoners used now and then to catch a glimpse of the royal children. Sometimes they would see the older boys playing in the splendid model farm, which their fond father believed would amuse and instruct them: at others they might be privileged to watch a game of cricket or rounders, at which games the boys were extremely adept. There was no

¹ William IV was the last King of England to rule over Hanover; for by Salic Law Victoria was precluded from succeeding to the family's German possessions.

² This residence, which was built at a cost of £44,000 in 1782, received an extraordinary decorative treatment seven years later:

The ceiling of the drawing-room was embellished in the year 1789 by an artist named Haas in a novel and peculiar manner from designs by Mr West. The figures are executed with stained marble dust instead of oil colours, fixed by a durable cement. In the centre, in an oval, is Genius reviving the arts. At the corners are the emblematical representations of Agriculture, Manufacture, Commerce and Riches, with appropriate symbols. In the intermediate compartments are delineations of astronomy, navigation, electricity, geography, fortification, gunnery, chemistry and botany, executed in imitation of basso-relievo. *Beauties of England and Wales*, vol. I, page 260 [published 1801].

pleasanter sight than to see the King and Queen walking with their children : it was very formal perhaps, but it was very unusual for a monarch to play the father so graciously, and good solid English parents went back to their homes highly appreciative of the way in which the Princes and Princesses were being brought up.

Now and again ‘a very select company’ of the nobility would be invited to Court to meet the royal children. For example, in 1769 the King and Queen staged a magnificent reception by the children. At one end of the room on a raised platform were their five children, ‘elegantly dressed in togas according to the Roman custom’ ; though the conventions of costume must have been considerably defied by the elaborate Order of the Garter, worn by the Prince of Wales, and the Order of the Bath, worn by his brother, Frederick, who since the tender age of seven months had been known to the world as the Bishop of Osnabrück.

The ‘reception’ incidentally was much criticized in the Press of the time. What a gross insult to ask a great Whig nobleman and his lady to make their obeisance before children of such a tender age ! So the caricaturists, who were almost certainly well paid for their services by the King’s political enemies, were put to work to ridicule what was after all nothing more than a father’s anxiety to bring his children up in the way that they must go ; and London laughed lustily when a cartoon appeared in which was depicted the nobility paying its respects to a Prince of Wales busy flying a kite, a Bishop of Osnabrück seated on a rocking-horse, and a Princess Royal being surreptitiously fed by a wet nurse conveniently posted behind a convenient screen.

It was inevitable that there should be gathered round the Princes and Princesses a veritable army of attendants. There were nurses and governesses, preceptors and tutors ; and when it is remembered what a busy official life George was compelled to lead it is remarkable that he was able to give so much of his time to the supervision of the arrangements for his children’s upbringing. Those nurses and governesses, preceptors and tutors, were invariably chosen by him ; and he received their reports on the physical and mental progress of their charges. It was a father’s duty to supervise his children’s education ; and George was never the man to shirk his duty.

At a later period, when the elder boys had already cut them-

selves adrift from the royal home, we have from Miss Burney an intimate glimpse of the royal family life. With Mrs Delaney she went to watch the pageantry which had been arranged in honour of the Princess Amelia's third birthday.

It was [she said] really a mighty pretty procession, the little Princess, just turned of three years old, in a robe-coat covered with fine muslin, a dressed close cap, white gloves and a fan, walked on alone and first, highly delighted in the parade, and turning from side to side to see everybody as she passed; for all the terracers stand up against the walls to make a clear passage for the royal family the moment they come in sight. Then followed the King and Queen themselves no less delighted with the joy of their little darling.

Mrs Delaney, once the friend of the great Swift, was then well over eighty; and as soon as the King saw her he came forward to speak to her. The Princess Amelia was also made to come to see the old lady, who was such a favourite with the King and Queen.

The little Princess [proceeded Miss Burney] went up to Mrs Delaney, of whom she is very fond, and behaved like a little angel to her. She then, with a look of inquiry and recollection, slowly, of her own accord, came behind Mrs Delaney to look at me. "I am afraid," said I, in a whisper, and stooping down, "your Royal Highness does not remember me." What think you was her answer? An arch little smile, and a nearer approach, with her lips pouted out to kiss me. I could not resist so innocent an invitation, but the moment I had accepted it, I was half afraid it might seem, in so public a place, an improper liberty. However, there was no help for it. She then took my fan, and, having looked at it on both sides, gravely returned it to me, saying, "O! a brown fan!" The King and Queen then bid her curtsy to Mrs Delaney, which she did most gracefully and they all moved on; each of the Princesses speaking to Mrs Delaney as they passed, and condescending to curtsy to her companion.

It was natural graciousness and genuine homeliness such as Miss Burney so often saw which won the King so many friends from among those of his subjects who were content to avoid the hatreds and bitterness of the political arena.

It is true that less pleasant tales have been told about his behaviour as a father. How he ordered the Prince of Wales to be soundly whipped because he had shouted outside the door of his

study—‘Wilkes for ever! Number Forty-five for ever!’ How now and then he himself had to resort to corporal punishment in his dealing with his sons. But is this proof of unwise parenthood? High-spirited youngsters—and the Princes were high-spirited boys—require firm handling; and the rough justice of the cane or birch is sometimes the only and the kindest way to maintain parental authority. As a matter of fact George was very fond of children, and particularly of boys. When he was down at Windsor nothing gave him greater pleasure than to meet and talk with the boys at Eton. There is a delightful story which demonstrates how well the King understood boys. He had invited a number of the boys from the school to visit him, and then he kept them for supper on the Terrace; but at the same time he ‘remembered to forget’ to extend the invitation to their masters, who went home supperless, while the boys had a thoroughly happy time with the King. On another occasion George learnt that the Headmaster had expelled one of the boys for poaching in Windsor Park—‘a misdemeanour which was not uncommon’: he thought the punishment far too severe, and while he would not undermine the Head’s authority by specially pleading the delinquent’s case he could—and did—offer him a commission in the Guards! Any movement for improving the lot of children was always assured of the King’s interest; and at a time when the fiercest champions of political liberty were still unimpressed by the need for popular education the King could be found saying that he hoped ‘to see the day when every poor child in my dominions will be able to read his Bible.’

* * *

As THE HEAD of his House it fell to George’s lot to watch over his brothers and sisters. Brothers might be allowed to look after themselves; but it was necessary to see that sisters were comfortably ‘settled in life’; and when he came to the throne in 1760 George found that at least two of his sisters were ‘marriageable.’ For Augusta, his eldest sister, he and his mother found a husband in Charles, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. The choice, however, was destined to be a most unfortunate one. The Duke was a competent soldier, brave as a lion in battle; but he was coarse and tactless; and poor Augusta in Brunswick—which Bedford described as ‘one of the worst towns even in Germany’

—was compelled to share her home—again according to Bedford, ‘a miserable wooden house, poorly furnished’—with her husband’s mistress, Madame de Hertzfeldt.

George had seen something of his brother-in-law’s lack of tact when he came to England to claim his bride in 1764. The Duke went out of his way to fraternize with the leading members of the parliamentary Opposition, and all his movements were calculated to indicate to the Londoners how much better fellow he was than their own King. It was the Brunswick Manifesto, an ‘astoundingly impolitic document,’ which brought to revolutionary France that patriotic consciousness which sent Frenchmen conquering from one end of Europe to another. The Duke, however, fell fighting against the Frenchmen at Jéna: his estates were confiscated by Napoleon; and his widow fled to the country of her birth to throw herself on the protection of her royal brother.

More unfortunate was the fate of her younger sister, the Princess Caroline Amelia, who in 1766 was married to the lecherous Christian VII of Denmark. She was a charming girl, only in her teens when she left her brother’s care; and in her new home it was her unhappy fate to experience almost at once a husband’s cruelty and a mother-in-law’s hostility. Her husband would not take her with him to England in 1768 when he went to pay his respects to his brother-in-law; and not surprisingly he had a very cold welcome at the English Court. ‘Desirous of making his [Christian’s] stay in this country as agreeable as possible’ George requested Weymouth, the Secretary of State for the Northern Department, to inquire from the Danish Ambassador how his royal master wished to be treated.

This [said George] will throw whatever may displease the King of Denmark . . . on his shoulders, and consequently free me from that désagrément.

He frankly admitted to Weymouth that he found the whole business ‘very distasteful.’ As it happened the visiting monarch spent much of his time in London’s more fashionable brothels!

His young Queen, disgusted by the way in which she was treated by her husband and mother-in-law and smarting under the indignities which they heaped upon her, threw discretion to the winds, and found in other company the enjoyment which

was absent in her own home. Her friendship with Struensee, her husband's chief Minister, was thought to conceal a *liaison*; and when a palace revolution sent Struensee to his death there were many Danes who thought that the Queen ought to share her 'lover's' fate. A squadron of British men-o'-war, which the Government had sent to the Baltic as soon as it was learnt that an English princess was in danger, frightened the triumphant court party out of their wits; and it was readily agreed that the Queen should be removed to Hanover. So Caroline was sent to Celle, the prison house of another erring Queen; and there she died in 1775. Whether she was guilty of the charges levelled against her in Denmark is doubtful; but she was admittedly indiscreet. George was torn by anxiety for her safety after she had fallen into the hands of Struensee's enemies; and he also seems to have believed that she had been guilty of a sordid intrigue with Struensee, so damning was the evidence against her.

His brother's indiscretions caused George endless unhappiness. Edward, Duke of York, William, Duke of Gloucester, and Henry, Duke of Cumberland, were dissolute and reckless in their behaviour: they showed none of that self-respect which prevents men from befouling family honour by defiance of conventions: no sooner were they out of one scrape than they were into another. Death carried away Edward, the most promising of the three, in 1767; but not before he had established for himself a reputation as a libertine. Three years later George had the unhappy experience of seeing Henry brought into the courts as defendant in an action of criminal conversation. The Duke had become infatuated with Lady Grosvenor; and the irate husband [who, as a matter of fact, was one of the most dissolute men about Town!] asked the courts to give him substantial damages for the hurt which he had suffered in consequence of his wife's seduction by the Duke. London was vastly amused by the 'revelations' of the court proceedings—and particularly at the Duke's atrociously bad grammar as revealed in his letters to Lady Grosvenor. The upshot of the sorry affair was that the Duke was mulcted in damages and costs to the tune of £13,000; and since he was without the means of paying them he had to ask George to assist him. Something must be done to save the family honour; and so George, sick at heart, wrote on November 5th,

1770, to Lord North to see if the sum could be taken out of the Civil List.

A subject of most private and delicate kind [he wrote] obliges me to lose no time in acquainting you that my two brothers have this day applied to me on the difficulty that the folly of the youngest has drawn him into ; the affair is too publick for you to doubt but that it regards the lawsuit ; the time will expire this day sevennight, when he must pay the damages and other expenses attending it. . . . I saw great difficulty in finding so large a sum as thirteen thousand pounds in so short a time ; but their pointing out to me that the prosecutor would certainly force the House, which would at this licentious time occasion disagreeable reflections on the rest of his family as well as on him. I shall speak more fully to you on this subject on Wednesday, but the time is so short that I did [not] choose to delay opening this affair till then ; besides I am not fond of taking persons on delicate affairs unprepared ; whatever can be done ought to be done ; and I ought as little as possible to appear in so very improper a business.

The gossips' tongues wagged much more malevolently when it was learnt that after dragging Lady Grosvenor's name through the courts the Duke had broken off his association with her. His new 'flame' was a Mrs Horton, the widow of a Derbyshire squire and the daughter of Lord Irnham [later the Earl of Carnhampton]. But the tit-bit of gossip was the Press announcement that the Duke had married the young widow ! That she was an attractive young woman there is no doubt : she had also an eye to business, refusing to live with the Duke except as his wife. Horace Walpole wrote in November 1771 to his friend, Sir Horace Mann, to tell him all about the marriage.

The new Princess of the Blood [he said] is a young widow of twenty-four, extremely pretty, not handsome, very well made, with the most amorous eyes in the world, and eyelashes a yard long ; coquette beyond measure, artful as Cleopatra, and completely mistress of all her passions and projects. Indeed, eyelashes three-quarters of a yard shorter would have served to conquer such a head as she has turned.

George was determined to put a stop to such conduct. It was whispered that his other brother, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, was married to Lord Waldegrave's widow, with whom he had been living for some years. He must act before it was too late.

In February 1772, therefore, the following message was delivered to Parliament:

His Majesty, being desirous, from paternal affection to his own family and anxious concern for the future welfare of his people, and the honour and dignity of his Crown, that the right of approving all marriages in the Royal Family [which ever has belonged to the Kings of this Realm as a matter of public concern] may be made effectual, recommends to both Houses of Parliament to take into their serious consideration whether it may not be wise and expedient to supply the defects of the laws now in being, and by some new provision more effectually to guard the descendants of his late Majesty King George II [other than the issue of Princesses who may have married or may hereafter marry into Foreign Families] from marrying without the approbation of His Majesty, his heirs and successors, first had and obtained.

Both Houses received the Royal Message ‘with the utmost coldness and disgust.’ Even some of the members of the Ministry found it difficult to give their support to the Bill which at the King’s wishes Mansfield had drafted. The principle behind the King’s intention was a violation of the right ‘that all Christians have to marry’—an argument which good Whigs used with much *éclat*, forgetful of the fact that that same right had been violated by their party when it was forbidden for a Prince of the Blood to marry a Catholic!

The Royal Marriage Bill was hotly contested as it was put through Parliament. Chatham condemned it as ‘new-fangled and impudent,’ and went on to observe that it invested the King with a ‘wanton and tyrannical’ power. Others indecently said that the title of the Bill ought to be changed to ‘An Act to encourage Fornications and Adultery in the descendants of George II!’ With the King the matter was a personal one: it was useless for North to attempt to explain that many of his colleagues in the Cabinet were doubtful about the propriety of the measure. On February 26th, 1772, the King wrote to his Prime Minister:

I cannot say that the management of the debate in the House of Lords has edified me. I hope there will be a meeting to-morrow to settle the mode of proceeding on Friday. I do expect every nerve to be strained to carry the Bill through both Houses with a becoming firmness, for it is not a question that immediately relates to Adminis-

tration, but personally to myself; therefore I have a right to expect a hearty support from every one in my service, and shall remember defaulters.

Eventually the Bill was piloted safely through Parliament, though not quite in the form that George wanted; but it was sufficiently rigid to prevent a repetition of these *mésalliances*. No member of the Royal Family under the age of twenty-five could contract a marriage without the consent of the sovereign; and after that age a marriage was only to be regarded as legal when twelve months' notice had been given to the Privy Council and the consent of Parliament had been obtained.

When the Duke of Gloucester saw that the Royal Marriage Bill would become law he wrote formally to tell his brother that he had married Lady Waldegrave in September 1766 and that she was about to become a mother. George's anger knew no bounds; and he ignored the letter. The Duke was pertinacious: he wrote again to ask that his marriage should be recognized. George replied that in due course 'the marriage as well as the birth' would be inquired into. Thereupon the Duke threatened to raise the matter in the House of Lords; and his brother, to avoid the unpleasant publicity which such an action would result in, ordered the Honourable Frederick Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, and Lord Chancellor Apsley to inquire whether the marriage was valid or not. They found that it was irregular but not invalid; but it was considered unnecessary for the couple to be remarried. And on May 29th the baby was born: he succeeded his father as Duke of Gloucester in 1805; and eleven years later married the Princess Mary, the King's fourth daughter.

It was a long time before George could bring himself to forgive his brothers. When Gloucester wrote to ask North in January 1774 to do something to relieve his financial embarrassment George would not hear of any assistance; and when the request was repeated in the following year the King was still smarting under the hurt which he had suffered by the Duke's marriage and subsequent support of the Opposition. In a letter written to North on January 16th, 1775, George said:

To the Duke's desire of going abroad I give my consent; to his offer of selling his two houses on St Leonard's Hill to me, that I have no

intention of making any purchase in that neighbourhood; and to the renewal of his request for a provision for his family, I do not see any reason to give a different answer than the last year. . . . My dear Lord, I cannot deny that on the subject of the Duke of Gloucester my heart is wounded. I have ever loved him more with the fondness one bears to a child than a brother: his whole conduct, from the time of his publishing what I must ever think a highly disgraceful step, has tended to make the breach wider; I cannot therefore bring myself, on a repetition of his application, to give him hopes of a future establishment for his children, which would only bring a fresh altercation about his wife, whom I can never think of placing in a situation to answer her extreme pride and vanity. Should he be so ill-advised as to have a provision for her moved in Parliament, the line of conduct to be held is plain. As my conduct is proper, I am not unwilling that the whole world may know it; and all the answer to be given by my Ministers, that it is natural the King should not apply to Parliament for provisions for the children of a younger branch of his family when he has not as yet done it for his own numerous offspring, and totally avoid mentioning the lady. So far for the public; but for yourself, I am certain you know my way of thinking too well to doubt that, should any accident happen to the Duke, I shall certainly take care of his children. To sum the whole up, I do not chuse, for the sake of preventing the affair being agitated in Parliament, to authorize your giving an answer that I do not think it right to give.

What worried George—and it worried many others in Society—was the fact that the Duchess's birth had been irregular: her mother had been a milliner—Mrs Clements by name—when Sir Edward Walpole had taken her under his protection.

Not until 1780 were the royal brothers reconciled: the Dukes—but not the Duchesses—were then allowed to come to Court. Gloucester did his utmost to make amends for the past and loyally supported George at a time when his political enemies were striving to make the royal position as difficult as possible. Cumberland, on the other hand, made those same enemies his boon companions; and his home, Cumberland House, was the Opposition's unofficial rendezvous. He was a perky little person, who loved to boast that he was a good Whig and had a contemptuous hatred of the clergy of the Establishment. He took his nephews—the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York—under his wing; and with the assistance of his coarse-mouthinged Duchess

[you had ‘to wash out your ears after being in her company’, it was said] introduced them to that disreputable manner of living which then seems to have had such a peculiar fascination for the Whig champions of liberty. It was ‘Uncle Cumberland’ who introduced ‘Taffy’ [in vain the Prince protested that the nickname cast a slur upon his Principality!] to Charles James Fox, and was therefore responsible for laying the foundations of an association which brought so much sadness to the King: it was ‘Uncle Cumberland’ who taught the young Princes to gamble, and instead of checking actually encouraged their *amours*.

* * *

SONS COULD BE more exasperating than brothers. Before he was twenty the Prince of Wales had to ask his father to extricate him from a nasty scrape. The young man had fallen violently in love with Mrs Mary Robinson, whose interpretation of *Perdita's* part in *The Winter's Tale* was greatly admired by theatre-goers; and he had written her some compromising letters. She would only return them on condition that she received £5000. On August 8th, 1781, the distracted father wrote to North:

I am sorry to be obliged to open a subject to Ld North that has long given Me much pain, but I can rather do it on paper than in conversation; it is a subject to which I know He is not quite ignorant. My Eldest Son got last year into a very improper connection with an Actress and woman of indifferent Character through the friendly assistance of Ld Malden a Multitude of letters past which she has threatened to publish unless He in short bought them of Her; He has made very foolish promises which undoubtedly by Her conduct to Him she entirely cancelled; I have thought it right to authorize the getting them from Her and have employed Lieut.-Col. Hotham on whose discretion I could depend to manage this business. He has now brought it to a conclusion, and has Her consent to get these letters on Her receiving 5000£. undoubtedly an enormous sum; but I wish to get my Son out of this shameful scrape. . . . I am happy at being able to say that I never was personally engaged in such a transaction which perhaps makes me feel this the stronger.

The boy had made a mistake, and his father, even though the sordidness of the business hurt him considerably, was willing to help him.

But the next ‘scrape’ was a much more serious one, which it

was quite impossible for the father to condone. Some time in 1784 the Prince made the acquaintance of a certain Mrs Fitzherbert, a lady of considerable personal charm, who had already been twice widowed; and the attentions which he danced upon her in her home in Park Street were soon the chief item of gossip in London's fashionable drawing-rooms. The Prince's friends, knowing that she was a Catholic and that he was reckless in his proposals of marriage, advised him to be careful not to involve himself too far with the lady: no great damage would be done if he 'kept' her as his mistress, but under no consideration must he marry her, because by the Act of Settlement the Heir to the Throne, unless he forewent his rights to the Succession, was prohibited from marrying a Catholic. To avoid the persistent proposals of the Prince the lady went abroad; but when he wrote protesting that he could not live without her she returned; and in December 1785 they were married. It was all done very secretly; but as is often the case with secrets the truth leaked out, and caused a great sensation in Town. The Heir to the Throne married to a Commoner and a Catholic! It was preposterous. The marriage was kept a secret from his political friends—indeed there is every reason to suppose that the Prince even denied to Fox that he was married; for when the matter was raised in the House of Commons 'dear Charles' rose in his place to protest that it was nothing more or less than a piece of idle gossip, and he spoke in a way which left the impression on the Members that the Prince had authorized him to make the public denial. Many were still unconvinced; and the rumour gathered force when the couple were seen everywhere together, and it was known that Mrs Fitzherbert was treated as though she was the lawful mistress of Carlton House and a recognized leader in Brighton's Society when they removed there—to economize, so the Prince said—in 1786.

If there was an element of doubt about the marriage there was none about the hopeless state of the Prince's finances. He was in debt everywhere; and his father roundly refused to assist him until he would give an undertaking to amend his ways. In 1787, however, Parliament voted £160,000 for the purpose of paying the Prince's debts, and increased his income by £10,000 a year; but five years later the scandal was revived, when it was known that not only did the Prince owe his creditors something like

£400,000 but that he was borrowing on his 'kingly expectations' at exorbitant rates of interest. By his extravagance he played into the Government's hands: his debts would be paid when he married; and although he had protested time and again that he would never marry and that as regards the Succession he had 'settled it with Frederick' the urgent need for money soon overrode his scruples of constancy to Mrs Fitzherbert. The result was that the Prince in April 1795 married his cousin, Caroline of Brunswick. It was a tragic marriage, which was rendered the more unhappy by the fact that its failure was eventually made everybody's business.

One loses patience with the Prince because he refused to realize the damage which scandal did to his family, and the sorrow which it caused his parents. He dabbled in politics when he lacked the ability to make a successful party politician: his associations with middle-aged women, like Lady Hertford and Lady Besborough, made him a laughing-stock with his fellow-countrymen. It was Peter Pindar who wrote the jingle:

But though his love was sought by all,
Game, dunghill, bantam, squab and tall,
Among the whole not one in ten,
Could please him like a tough old Hen.

And every laugh must have cut the pride of the father and mother to the quick.

The father's favourite son was Frederick, Duke of York. In his youth he was as wild as the Prince of Wales; but he never allowed his heart altogether to run away with his head. Now and then, it is true, he was involved in unpleasant 'scrapes' but they were far less notorious than those of his eldest brother. When he was eighteen the King had sent him on a *Grand Tour*; and as a result of the time he spent in Germany he was in many ways the most 'German' of the Royal Family. He loved food and drink; he swore coarsely; he treated his mistresses shamefully; and then went about his business like any other man. On his return to England he came under the influence of 'Uncle Cumberland'; and for two years [1787-1789], much to his father's grief, he was making a great deal of fuss about his attachment to Whig principles. The refinements of vice at Carlton House and Cumberland House were lost upon such a coarse

person as Frederick; and he broke with his uncle and brother and their friends. His father was delighted, and gave him a house in Whitehall: he also suggested that he ought to get married; and without any fuss or argument Frederick carried out his father's wishes, marrying in 1791 Frederica, the daughter of Frederick William II of Prussia. The marriage was not a successful one; but Frederick was much too conventional to noise the fact abroad; and whenever he visited his charming wife he always took her out with him and behaved as though they were ideally happy.

His father was extremely proud of Frederick's keen interest in the Army. 'The Good Old Duke of York,' as the country came to call him, was not a gifted leader of men: his failure in Flanders during the war against revolutionary France, as has been seen, necessitated his recall home. But he was nevertheless a sound military organizer; and the work which he did as Commander-in-Chief from 1798 to 1809 and again after 1811 contributed in no small measure to his country's military successes during the Napoleonic War—a fact which Wellington publicly admitted when in 1814 he went to Parliament to receive the nation's thanks. It was Frederick who founded the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and the Military School at High Wycombe—the forerunner of the Royal Military College—for the training of officers; and although a great deal of mud was thrown at him during the 'Duke and Darling' inquiry in 1809 the Army never entirely lost its faith in him.

George had decided to make his third son, William Henry, a sailor; and when the boy was fifteen he was sent to sea in *H.M.S. Prince George*, which was the flag-ship of Rear-Admiral Robert Digby. The young Prince saw active service during the American Revolution, taking part in the relief of Gibraltar in 1780 and serving under Rodney's command at St Vincent two years later; and he quickly showed that he had in him the making of a competent young officer. Nelson, under whom he later served, had a high opinion of the Prince. He wrote:

He has his foibles, as well as private men; but they are far overbalanced by his virtues. In his professional line he is superior to nearly two-thirds, I am sure, of the list; and in attention to orders and respect to his superior officers I hardly know his equal.

GEORGE THE THIRD

From the King's point of view this was highly satisfactory; and when the 'Sailor Prince' came home on his first leave he had a wonderful reception at Court and when he appeared in public with his parents.

He gave his father a little trouble when he was in his twentieth year. He had fallen in love with a Sarah Martin, who was the daughter of the Naval Commissioner at Portsmouth, Sir Henry Martin; and in his bluff way the young man went at once to his mother to ask her to plead his cause with the King so that he might marry the lady. This, of course, was out of the question; and the King quite wisely decided that the young lieutenant must proceed at once to a new station. He wrote to his 'peculiar Admiral,' Howe:

On returning from hunting this evening the Queen desired to speak to me before I went to dinner. It was to communicate to me the arrival of William. I find it indispensably necessary to remove him from the Commissioner's House at Portsmouth. And therefore desire that the *Hebe* may be removed to the Plymouth station, or William placed on board the 32 Gun Frigate that is there. I merely throw out what occurs to me on a very unpleasant and unexpected event.

The plan worked perfectly; and Miss Martin was quickly forgotten.

The Prince's attachment to Nelson involved him in another 'scrape.' When Nelson was recalled from the West Indian station in 1787 the Prince refused to serve under his successor; and in defiance of orders he sailed his ship, *H.M.S. Pegasus*, to Canada. The Government, as a punishment for his breach of discipline, ordered him to stay in Quebec for the winter; but the young captain again refused to do what he was told, and promptly sailed for home. His father was determined that he must be punished just as any other captain would have been punished; and orders were sent to William to remain in Plymouth. But the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York were equally determined to frustrate their father's wishes; and they went to Plymouth to console with their younger brother; and to instil into him some of their own wayward opposition to the King. In the meantime the 'Sailor Prince' had formed another amorous attachment—this time with a merchant's daughter;

and the King knew that the only way in which the spell of the lady's charms could be broken was to send the young man back to sea. So he escaped punishment for his disobedience; and at the same time secured the command of one of the best ships in the Navy—the frigate, *H.M.S. Andromeda*.

His return to England in April 1789 was followed by another 'brush' with his father. He was annoyed because he had not been made a Duke like his elder brother Frederick; and when the King tried to put him off he allowed a notice to be inserted in the newspapers to the effect that he proposed coming out as a candidate for Totnes in the forthcoming parliamentary election. There was nothing for it but for the King to give way; and William was duly created Duke of Clarence. Like Frederick he quickly found life at Carlton House rather boring; and towards the end of 1789 he set up house at Richmond with a Miss Polly Finch, a rather vulgar but quite harmless little person. In 1791, however, to every one's disgust, he went to live with a popular actress, Mrs Dorothea Jordan, who was the mother of several children by several fathers. She was a homely little woman and for twenty years they lived together very happily.

What could the King do? William was always very pleasant when he came to Court, but he stolidly refused to leave his mistress, and he was quite unmoved by the sneers of Society who said that he was living on Mrs Jordan's money. He was deeply hurt when the Government would not give him active employment during the war with France; but he did not vent his wrath upon his father, as the Prince of Wales did when he was refused a general's baton; and he solaced himself in the company of his mistress and their many children. His father was much grieved when he spoke against Wilberforce's motion for the abolition of the slave trade.

The promoters of abolition [the Duke said] are either fanatics or hypocrites, and in one of these classes I rank Mr Wilberforce.

But that was his bluff way of stating his own opinion; and, though Whigs could rant and rave against his lack of education, the people generally thought very highly of the 'Sailor Prince,' who was seen crying like a child when the nation had laid Nelson to rest in St Paul's in November 1805.

It was George's ambition that his sons should be brought up

to serve their country ; and consequently when his fourth boy, Edward, was seventeen he was sent out to Germany to train as a soldier. But German methods, excellent though they were, would never be tolerated in the British Army ; and when the young Prince, who was a highly efficient officer in every way, resorted to them to restore discipline in British regiments there was a great outcry against his harshness and cruelty. Even his father was greatly put out by the tales which were told [and in telling grossly exaggerated] of his son's attempt to lick his regiment—the Royal Fusiliers—into shape ; and he readily agreed to the suggestion of the Government that the young man must be transferred from 'the Rock' to Canada in 1791.

The Prince was associated with Canada for nearly ten years ; and he did much to enliven the dullness of colonial Society. Edward was never a dissolute man : he was far too dignified even to get drunk with his brother officers in Mess ; and the life which he lived with his mistress—Madame de St Laurent—was a model of domestic felicity. His bravery in action [he fought for a year in the West Indies] won him the thanks of Parliament ; and gladdened his father's heart. His strict code of discipline, however, was his undoing : although in 1802 he was appointed the Governor-General of Gibraltar the Government was compelled to recall him in the following year as a result of a mutiny which had broken out among the regiments at 'the Rock.' Edward, who had now been created Duke of Kent, believed that his brother Frederick was responsible for his disgrace : he was Commander-in-Chief, and had he so wished could have kept him at 'the Rock' ; and the quarrel which ensued between the two brothers not unnaturally had its reactions upon the parents. There was, for example, more than a suspicion that Edward had had a hand in framing the charges brought against Frederick during the 'Duke and Darling' revelations of 1809. The 'family' always thought that Edward took himself far too seriously ; but he was always very attentive to his father's wishes ; and curiously enough the old King even allowed him to bring 'Madame' to Court.

The most brilliant—and certainly the best hated—of the King's sons was Ernest, who became Duke of Cumberland in 1799. He had fought with great distinction in the Low Countries ; and the terrible wound which he had sustained in the left side of his face

gave him a most repulsive appearance. Two things contributed to his unpopularity—he was a Tory of the Tories, and unlike his other brothers he kept his affairs to himself. Ardent Whigs professed to see in this fifth son of the King a most brutal dictator, whose abilities at any time might lead him to assume the leadership of the Tory party; and consequently everything was done to blacken his character in the eyes of the public. In an age which battened on scandal it was most disconcerting to know nothing about the carryings-on of the Duke; and the darkest tales were told about his vices, which were usually fictions of the scandal-mongers' vivid imaginations.

Nothing endeared the Duke to his father more than his resolute opposition to Catholic Emancipation: he spoke against it in the House of Lords; and the truth is that his opposition was both feared and respected. But in May 1810 the Duke was the central figure in a most unpleasant scandal. The popular versions of the affair all made him a murderer: it was said that his valet, a Corsican named Sellis, had come home to find the Duke in bed with Madame Sellis, and that his master, annoyed at being disturbed by an interfering husband, had savagely cut him down with a sabre. There were plenty of people ready to believe such a tale about the Duke of Cumberland; and gossiping tongues quickly manufactured a variety of highly-coloured and corroborating details. The truth reads very differently. For no apparent reason [unless in a fit of madness Sellis determined to kill the Duke out of revenge for his master's bitter hostility to the Catholic Church] the valet made a murderous attack on his sleeping Duke, and then cut his own throat. The jury, whose foreman was Francis Place, one of the bitterest opponents of the Tory Duke, were in no doubt about the facts: without leaving their places they returned a verdict of *felo de se* on Sellis.

The strangest of the King's sons was Augustus, who in 1801 became Duke of Sussex. With his elder brother, Ernest, and his young brother, Adolphus, he had been educated at the University of Göttingen, a place of learning of which their father thought most highly. With infinite satisfaction the King reported on his sons' progress to Bishop Hurd:

My accounts from Göttingen of the little colony I have sent there is very favourable. All three sons seem highly delighted and pleased with those that have the inspection of them. But what pleases me

most is the satisfaction they express at the course of theology they have begun with Professor Less. Professor Heyne gives them lessons in classics, and has an assistant for the rougher work. They learn history, geography, moral philosophy, mathematics and experimental philosophy, so that their time is fully employed. I think Adolphus at present seems the favourite of all, which from his lively manner is natural, but the good sense of Augustus will in the end prove conspicuous.

Unfortunately Augustus's idea of 'good sense' was very different from his father's. His *affaire* with Lady Augusta Murray, the daughter of the Earl of Dunmore, in 1793 was naturally frowned upon by his father; and one can imagine what the King's feelings must have been when he learnt that Augustus had taken the unusual course of having the banns published in St George's, Hanover Square, between a certain Mr Augustus Frederick and a Miss Augusta Murray! What had happened was that Lady Augusta was with child by the Prince, and he wished to make 'an honest woman' of her. But the 'marriage' which was duly solemnized was invalid under the terms of the Royal Marriage Act; and at the King's command it was annulled.

Soon after 1800 the couple parted; and in 1806 and 1809 the Duke had to ask the Courts to restrain his 'wife' from using the Royal Arms and styling herself the Duchess of Sussex. But what hurt the King more than anything else was his son's championship of Whig principles. The other sons, it is true, had coquetted with Whiggery; but their attachments to the leaders of the Opposition were invariably dictated by a desire to embarrass their father. Sussex's attachment was the genuine thing: he sincerely believed in the political principles which he so vigorously defended; and it has not inaptly been said of him that he was 'the most consistently Liberal-minded person of the first half of the nineteenth century.' The poor King held up his hands in horror when he was told that Augustus was supporting those 'innovators' and 'enemies of the Constitution' who clamoured for relief for the Catholics.

The 'Prince Charming' of the family was Adolphus, who was created Duke of Cambridge. His name was never scarred by the breath of scandal: his behaviour to his parents was above reproach. Like his brothers Frederick and Ernest he had fought for his country against the French in Flanders; he had been

severely wounded in the shoulder during the campaign; and when he was recovered went back to fight again. During the critical years of the French onslaught against Europe he had acted as his father's Viceroy in Hanover; and although he could not save the electorate from the all-conquering armies of Napoleon he was nevertheless able to win for himself deservedly high praise as a soldier and administrator, who in the rare intervals between his public duties devoted himself to music and science.

The Dear charming Prince Adolphus took leave of me this night. I shall see him no more as he's to go in a few days' time. I quite pity the King and indeed all the family: he has been so delightfully pleasant with them all that they will be undone without him. You never saw such a picture of a fond father, as the King with him, or indeed anything prettier than the son's constant affectionate attention to his father.

The words were penned by Lady Chatham when the Prince was about to re-join his regiment overseas after he had recovered from his wound. When he returned from Hanover the Duke lived quietly with his father and mother, always thinking of their happiness and trying by his own behaviour to make amends for the anguish which they had suffered on his brothers' behalf.

* * *

DEATH TOOK ITS customary toll in the family of which George was the head. In September 1765 'the consumption' carried away Prince Frederick William, his youngest brother: he had been a constant visitor to the little fellow's bedside; and had taken delight in talking to the little invalid about the books which Frederick read so eagerly. Two years later came the news that his elder brother, Edward, Duke of York, had died in Monaco from a chill. That was perhaps a harder blow to bear: they had parted on bad terms—for George had been compelled to reprove his 'lively' brother for his reckless manner of life. But the blow was softened when there came a letter written by Edward on his deathbed to ask forgiveness for the sorrow which his behaviour had caused.

On February 8th, 1772, the Dowager-Princess of Wales died. To the end she was the imperious lady she had always been; and with the same courage and patience which she had displayed

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towards the slander and abuse heaped upon her by her enemies she bore a distressing and painful illness. A 'cancer' was implanted in her throat; but she would not allow the doctors to examine the affected part; and to the end she persisted in dressing to receive her son and daughter-in-law. They visited her every day during her long illness: she often kept them talking for two or three hours on end. It was a sad letter which the King wrote to North on February 7th, 1772.

I am sorry to acquaint you [he said] that my mother is grown so much worse that I cannot appear at Court this day; whenever this tragical scene is ended I shall give you notice of it that I may not from any personal affliction put the least delay to public business.

It was on that day that the King and Queen called upon the Dowager-Princess an hour earlier than was their custom: they did so because they had been told by the doctors that the end was near. The invalid thereupon asked why they had come before she was ready to receive them; and probably for the first time in his life George lied to his mother—he said that he had mistaken the time.

The death of his sister Caroline at Celle in May 1775, following so quickly upon the tragedy which had overtaken her in Denmark, was another personal sorrow which George was called upon to bear. But it was in August 1782, when Death carried away his little son, Alfred, that the real burden of sorrow descended upon him. On the 20th he wrote to Bishop Hurd:

There is no probability, and, indeed, scarce a possibility, that my youngest child can survive this day. . . . As I have not you present to converse with, I think it the most pleasing occupation . . . to convey to you that I place my confidence that the Almighty will never fill my cup of sorrow fuller than I can bear. And, when I reflect on the dear cause of our tribulation, I consider his change to be so greatly for his advantage, that I sometimes think it unkind to wish his recovery had been effected. And when I take this event in another point of view, and reflect how much more miserable it would have been to have seen him lead a life of pain, and perhaps end thus at a more mature age, I also confess that the goodness of the Almighty appears strongly in what certainly gives me great concern, but might have been still more severe.

UNRULY FAMILY

The King's fears were justified: the baby died that same day. Mrs Stuart, who was a member of the Household, has left an account of the sorrow which the father and mother experienced.

I was at Windsor Castle [she wrote] at the time of the death of Prince Alfred, a child of two years old, and who had suffered great agonies. When he had become tranquil, shortly before expiring, the King took the Queen out of the room, and expressed a wish to read a sermon as usual, it being Sunday evening. He selected that of Blair on Death, which closes with the beautiful description from the Revelations of the Church triumphant. While reading it a slight knock was heard at the door. The King seemed to shudder, but went on reading. When the description was ended he went up to the Queen, and taking her hand most affectionately said, "Such, my dearest, I humbly trust our little Alfred now is. That knock informed me he is passed from death into life." He then wept tenderly.

Less than a year later another of his children had 'passed from death into life'—the four years old Octavius. Hannah More wrote:

The King and Queen have suffered infinitely from the loss of the sweet little Prince, who was the darling of their hearts. I was charmed with an expression of the King's—"Many people," said he, "would regret they had ever had so sweet a child, since they were forced to part with him. That is not my case. I am thankful to God for having graciously allowed me to enjoy such a creature for four years."

Again the distracted father turned for solace to Bishop Hurd; and on May 6th, 1783, three days after Octavius's death, he wrote to ask him to come to his side.

I have proposed to the Queen, and she approves of it, that I should desire you to come on Saturday . . . that, on Sunday, in my chapel in the castle, we may have the comfort of hearing you preach, and receiving from your hands the holy communion. I think this a very proper time for renewing the baptismal vow; and, though greatly grieved, I feel true submission to the decrees of Providence, and great thankfulness for having enjoyed for four years that dear infant.

The King had already told another that he thought he would die of grief as a result of the baby's death.

Two more deaths came to his family while he had his sanity.

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In September 1790 his brother, Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, ended a wasted life; and fifteen years later died William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester. That he could not show remorse in the former case was only natural; for the Duke had wilfully alienated his brother's affections by his devilish efforts to debauch the King's sons. But with Gloucester it was different: as boys they had been boon companions, and although an irregular marriage had for a time driven them apart they had come together in the Duke's later years. Rose noted in his Diary that when the news came to Weymouth that Gloucester was dead 'His Majesty's mind was deeply affected.'

Epilogue

*F*OR NINE DREARY years the pathetic shadow of a once active King was given kindly shelter in Windsor Castle. In the early part of the summer of 1811 the doctors were confident that their patient would recover his sanity : in May they allowed him to ride in the castle's grounds.

We crowded to the Park and Castle Yard. The favourite horse was there. The venerable man, blind but steady, was soon in the saddle, as I had often seen him—a hobby groom at his side. He rode through the Little Park to the Great Park. The bells rang. The troops fired a *feu de joie*. The King returned to the castle within an hour.

The writer of these words, who was present when Windsor went to greet their King on that morning of May 20th, 1811, was probably quite correct in stating that George 'was never again seen without those walls.' That he sometimes went out is certain ; but in the future every care was taken to shield him from the gaze of inquisitive onlookers. During the summer the confidence of the doctors waned as they saw the deterioration in the King's mental health. By October the alienist Dr Willis intimated that he could do nothing further for the patient ; and in the following January the doctors as a body, in examination by the Privy Council, were driven to admit that there was only the remotest chance of sanity returning to the King.

Incapable of comprehending the present, the afflicted King could conjure up visions of the past. For long hours he solaced himself conversing with the shadows of men who had served him and his country in former days : when they left him he chatted gaily to the angels who, so he thought, were always about him. Nor could madness destroy his love of music. He strummed on the harpsichord and played the flute : once, so it is said, he took

infinite pains in arranging a programme of music descriptive of madness.

At least once, for a brief space, sanity returned to him. That was in 1814. How much he was told it is impossible to know; but he is said to have received with genuine pleasure the news that the French had been driven out of Hanover. His attendants may then have told him of the glorious achievements of British regiments in the Peninsula—how they had driven the Frenchmen back over the Pyrenees into their own country. They may have told him that he was the last survivor of his father's family, for his sister Augusta had died while the pall of madness enshrouded him.

No matter what he learnt in that brief period of reason he was soon back again in the shadows—back to his music, his conversations with dead statesmen and angels. The afflicted monarch was kindly spared the knowledge that his eldest son was the most unpopular man in the kingdom, and that his former Whig friends were everywhere denouncing him for the way in which he was treating his wayward wife. He was mercifully spared, too, participation in a nation's grief, when the Princess Charlotte, married only a little time before to the charming Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, died in giving birth to a dead child. He could not feel the shame of the titters which greeted Peter Pindar's ridicule of the unseemly way in which his sons were casting about them for wives so that the succession might not be endangered.¹

Nor did he know that Death had taken from him his beloved Queen. For the greater part of his life she had been at his side. He had loved her loyally when it was the fashion to violate the marriage vow. They had shared joys and sorrows together. When she came to his country to be his Queen many of his subjects had laughed: she was to them so like a German *frau*, so 'stuffy' and plain; but she had lived to become the greatest lady in the land; and the charming account left by Richard Rush, the American Minister to her husband's Court, is a tribute to a husband's influence as well as to the graciousness of an old

¹ Peter Pindar wrote maliciously:

Agog are all, both old and young,
Warm'd with desire to be prolific;
And prompt with resolution strong,
To fight in Hymen's war terrific.

lady. Wrote Rush, in describing the scene of the marriage of the King's third daughter Elizabeth to the Landgrave Frederick of Hesse-Homburg, which took place in February 1818:

This venerable personage—the head of a large family, her children then clustering about her—the female head of a great empire—in the seventy-sixth year of her age, went the rounds of the company speaking to all. There was a kindness in her manner from which time had struck away useless forms. No one did she omit. Around her neck hung a miniature portrait of the King. He was absent, scathed by the hand of Heaven; a marriage going on in one of his palaces, he the lonely suffering tenant of another. But the portrait was a token superior to a Crown. It bespoke the natural glory of wife and mother, eclipsing the artificial glory of Queen. For more than fifty years this royal pair had lived together in affection. The scene would have been one of interest anywhere. May it not be noticed on a throne?

On Wednesday, December 2nd, 1818, they bore this venerable lady from Kew to Windsor to lay her to rest in the Chapel of St George; and happily deafness and feebleness of mind kept from the old King the message which Windsor's bells tolled forth on that December day.

In January 1820 Windsor's bells rang again. In mournful notes they paid homage to a dead King. With the coming of the New Year the King's bodily health, which during his long mental illness had been wonderfully good, had begun to cause the doctors alarm. He no longer took his food, and it was with the greatest difficulty that his attendants could keep his body warm. The doctors continued to have faith in the magnificent constitution of their patient; and not until January 27th was Frederick sent for. On his mother's death Parliament had thoughtfully placed the mad King in the care of this favourite son; and for two days the Duke, with his sisters Augusta, Mary and Sophia, watched at the bedside of the dying man. At about eight-thirty on the evening of January 29th the end came; and messengers rode out of Windsor to tell the British people that a new reign had begun.

In the evening of February 16th, 1820, between ranks of soldiers bearing torches, the last state journey was made from the Castle to the Chapel of St George. Minute guns fired dismally: the bells of Windsor tolled: the Duke of York as Chief Mourner

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followed the coffin. As the cortege entered the Chapel the Choir sang the anthem—‘I know that my Redeemer liveth’; and when the time came to lower the coffin into the vault the Committal was read by Dr Sutton, whom the dead King, in defiance of Pitt’s wishes, had preferred to the archiepiscopal See of Canterbury in 1805.

Bibliographical Note

The bibliography of George III's reign is such a terrifying one that I was frankly at a loss as to know how to begin this note to my readers. It must not for a moment be supposed that my list is complete; but I hope that it can be accepted as representative of all points of view. I have offered no observations on the works included in the list: had I done so I should have been involved inevitably in controversy, and I have no liking for that. I would like, however, publicly to state that I owe the authors of these works a real debt of gratitude not only for the genuine entertainment which was mine in exploring an interesting period of English history but also in meeting a remarkable King and more remarkable man.

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Memoirs from 1754 to 1758 of Earl Waldegrave.

Letters of Lady Hervey.

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Grenville Papers. Edited Smith.

Bedford Correspondence. Edited Russell.

Correspondence of Chatham. Edited Taylor and Pringle.

Recollections Personal and Political. Nicholls.

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